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Glen A. Pierce

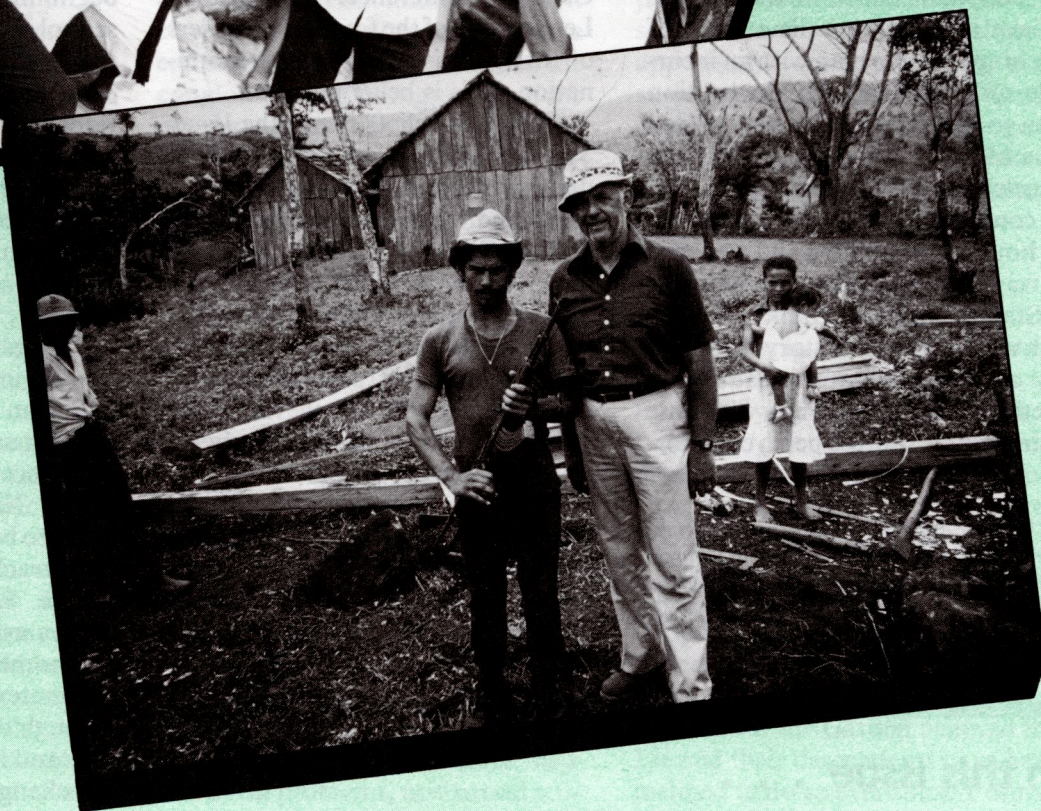
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evangelical
VISITOR

July 1990



So close, and yet . . .

OUR General Conference theme is "This We Believe." I am to address this theme and to apply it to the Brethren in Christ. In doing so I want to read two verses from John's Gospel:

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).

These two verses are the key that unlocks the Gospel according to John. They say crucial things to Christians that speak of "Belief Power." That is what the Gospel of John is all about. It is the message of the whole Bible. As people of the Book, we Brethren in Christ embrace these truths.

Amazing things happen when people believe—believe in themselves, believe in a cause, believe a set of teachings. A little man with an incurable affliction suffered persecution even to death, but Paul evangelized Asia Minor and Europe. A man in a wheelchair, afflicted with polio, led his country through some of its darkest hours of depression and war, and he was chosen president of the United States four times. Franklin Roosevelt went down in history as one of his country's greatest leaders. A Brethren in Christ woman with little training or resources believed in for-

Owen H. Alderfer is bishop of the Central Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. This article was delivered as the General Conference sermon on Saturday, June 30, 1990, at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

In this issue . . .

. . . the *Visitor* continues a tradition by publishing the General Conference sermon (which has served for decades as a "keynote address" for Conference). In addition, Phoebe and Onesimus speak to various issues related to this year's General Conference.

And in August, plans are to report on the flavor and the decisions of Conference. You won't find those articles in *McLeans* or *Newsweek*—only in the *Evangelical Visitor*. So if you received this issue at Conference and aren't a subscriber, sign up at the *Visitor* display . . . without delay!

GENERAL CONFERENCE 1990

Belief po

eign missions and gained the ear of General Conference. And Rhoda Lee was one of the founding mothers of foreign missions of our denomination. This is belief power.

"Belief in belief" is not the issue. The call is to a specific, verified, documented belief structure that has ends and purposes, as stated in John's Gospel. We are called to believe, and the focus is made clear. And so I want to address the theme under three heads.

- I. The context of believing
- II. The power of believing
- III. The release of Christian belief power

The context of believing

My generation in North America grew up in the far end of a Christian consensus that had dominated Can-

ada and United States from their beginnings. When I went to public school in 1929, we prayed the Lord's prayer and thought in Christian concepts. Profanity was forbidden and right and wrong were principles held in common by nearly all. Most teachers in my school were members of churches. They were models of Christianity within a community strongly influenced by Christian values.

My grandchildren live and attend school in a different world. The Christian consensus is gone. Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer have long since been ruled out of the classroom. Names of deity are more likely to be heard in profanity—even from teachers—than in religious discourse. Right and wrong are relativities associated with local mores and home taboos. And this is part of the context of believing. As we work through the final decade of this century and move into the twenty-first, the changes in our context will impact us even more strikingly.

The context of believing is being shaped by demographic adjustments. First, population growth is both a challenge and a specter. Houses and factories fill the empty spaces and concrete replaces farm land. The sheer weight of population growth offers a challenge simply to keep up



wer

by Owen H. Alderfer

with the task of evangelization—even in North America where pressures are relatively limited. Second, the situation is enormously complicated for us white, Anglo-Saxon Christian types as we move from majority to minority. In today's world, twelve babies of every hundred born are white. In Southern California, white pupils in the schools are a minority with the majority being made up of hispanic, black, and oriental students. In New York state, 40 percent of elementary and high school pupils belong to an ethnic minority. Within a decade, according to *Time* magazine, the proportion is expected to reach 50 percent.

What does this say to us about the context of believing? Apart from threatening our security and causing us to fear for our grandchildren, it says we are in a world of myriad beliefs. I still am somewhat shocked to see Islamic mosques in the cities and countrysides of our land. Buddhist and Hindu temples in North America shake me up a bit. This is the pluralistic world of our time, and leading people to belief becomes enormously more complex. Whereas our earlier task was to bring people from unbelief to faith in Christ—from sin to righteousness—we now have competitive faith-systems that

confront us on every hand. Not only does this affect our faith structure, it challenges the very culture we have embraced as our heritage. Given the conglomerate of backgrounds of the new North America, what is our history? Is it Plymouth Rock and Puritanism—or is it Mecca and the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Congo? Indeed, the “browning of America” alters our context of belief.

The context of belief is modified by rapidly changing culture. Dr. Wilma Longstreet, Professor of Education at the University of New Orleans, called attention to the fact that a person living in North America in 1790 could return in 1890 and not feel terribly lost. On another hand, one living in 1900 would be much less at home returning in 1950. And those of us alive in 1950 can compare the cultural changes as of 1990, and we are not left very comfortable. Just a few such changes include new family structures, new bioethical problems, new sexual attitudes and views on marriage. She noted that the wisdom of the elders is of questionable value to the young. What then can be believed? Many have settled for a radical individualism: forget the past, find your own way, do your own thing.

And so, the world that is shaping is a new world. The context of belief

challenges us at every turn. James Rutherford, Chief Education Officer and Director of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, summarizes the characteristics of this context under three points: (1) Complexity. We are dealing with trade-offs rather than *truth*. (2) Uncertainty. We can expect that boundaries are going to fade; life will be permeable; majorities and minorities will blend together. (3) Transition. We are going through the most dramatic transition period of all time, one that we cannot yet name, created by technology. Used poorly, it will engulf and destroy us; used well, it will bring about one world in which all are cared for in new, creative ways.

In such a world there is great unease: Where is certainty? What can one believe? We are told that interest in the spiritual realm is high; people are looking for answers, and so the cults, the occult, and religious appeals of all sorts attract people. In such a world the Brethren in Christ declare that we have found a great answer: “This we believe!” There is a standing place and we have something assuring to share.

The power of believing

All people are believers; indeed, to be human is to be a believer. We are made for believing, and only as we find satisfying, fulfilling patterns of belief can life find wholeness and meaning. Our theme, “This we believe,” is not unique to the Brethren in Christ. The content is.

The crux of the issue is that believing can be positive or negative. The temptation in the Garden was directed at believing—believing God's directive, or believing the Lie. The residents of the Garden believed the Lie and their descendents have been inclined to do so ever since. Positive believing is life-affirming, leading to wholeness. Negative believing accepts the Lie and ends in grief.

Believing can be powerful—whether rooted in the Truth or the Lie. History is made up of accounts of believing and the results—good and bad. In the story of the Christian Church we see belief power trans-

forming the Western world from the power of the sword to the power of the Word as people turned from decadent philosophies and cynicism to belief in God who gave himself to redeem from sin. The blood of martyrs was the seed of the Church as believing people gave all, shared faith and love, and demonstrated great belief power.

Islam emerged in the 7th century embracing many beliefs in common with Judaism and Christianity. With a simple creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," the faith spread quickly, encompassing Christian lands east and south of the Mediterranean. With the strategy, "Allah, tribute, or the sword," the belief of Islam shortly became a major world religion and competitor to Christianity. Belief power through Islam is dramatically demonstrated in our time in the rise of fundamentalist Islam with the coming of the late Ayatollah Khomeini to power in Iran and spreading from there.

Believing can be powerful. Had we time, we could document this further, outlining the alterations in belief that changed Western civilization with the Enlightenment from the 18th century forward. We could trace the rise and power of Marxist beliefs that threatened to engulf the world, only to prove to be a false hope to millions as they rejected its belief system since we last met in General Conference. We could reflect on belief power of the cults that spread their influence across the world, gathering together people who are searching for something to believe in.

There is believing that leads to death. Proverbs 14:12 summarizes a reality we have come to know: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." These are the humanly generated systems and plans that promise satisfaction but result in futility. They are rooted in time, not eternity; flesh, not spirit; self, not God. A gross example from our own century is Nazism which had powerful appeal and produced amazing results in little more than a decade. It promised a

utopia, but produced a holocaust. The death-dealing spirit of that system rings on in elitist attitudes and practices of racial discrimination that tempt us to favor the rich and well-placed at the expense of the poor and deprived.

But there is believing that brings life. Our text declares it and charts its route. It is God-initiated, not humanly generated. It is soundly supported in the signs of God's activity: "Jesus did many miraculous signs" First are the wonders Jesus did, demonstrating his authority in heavenly and earthly realms, and then, continuing in the experiences of believing people whose regenerated lives take on meaning and quality that transcend earth and time. It is documented in holy Scripture: "These are written that you may believe." They can be examined and confirmed. It is embraced by people as the crucial life-transforming act: "That you (all) may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It is verified in the new lives of people who believe: ". . . believing you may have life in his name." These are the people whose new lives demonstrate meaning, purpose, and power personally, in home, in church, in community.

The release of Christian belief power

"This we believe": In the words of our text, in the history of the church, and in the lives of believing people—herein lies the way of life, the basis of the new community, and the path to heaven. The release of Christian belief power by the Holy Spirit through the lives of persons committed to God is the way to reach our world for Christ. This is true even in our context of growing unbelief and antagonism toward God, his ways, and his people in our time. What Robert Theobald wrote in his book *The Rapids of Change*, though not addressed specifically to Christians, applies to us: "Change agents . . . are true believers. They are convinced that if the society could only accept their particular answer or set of answers, our problems would vanish or at least be greatly reduced" (p. 43).

Belief power is released in at least three intertwining modes: being, speaking, and doing.

The history of Christianity reflects this truth across the years in its general flow. The release of Christian belief power is particularly seen in moments of witness and insight as gifts of God breaking into the human experience.

One such picture comes from *The Epistle to Diognetus*. This letter was probably written in the first half of the second century and describes a new way of life, picturing how Christian belief was lived out in those early days:

(The Christians) . . . share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry as do (others); they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are the citizens of heaven.¹

The beliefs of the Christians gave them a quality of life that appealed to many whose meaningless lives called them to reach out for something better.

The powerful witness of one Christian from the fourth century demonstrates the release of belief power that turned the course of history on a given point. Telemachus was his name. First written about by the church historian Theodoret, his story has been retold often:

¹ *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, pp. 26-27.

Telemachus had devoted his life to the service of the Lord and lived as a hermit in a remote village in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. He spent his days in prayer and in tending his garden. One day he thought he heard the voice of God calling him to go to Rome, and so he obeyed and set out.

Weeks later he reached the city. It was at the time of a great festival with crowds in the streets of the city. Telemachus joined the crowd moving toward the Colosseum. He followed them into the stadium to observe the spectacle. When he realized that the gladiators were about to engage in battle to the death, he cried out, "In the name of Christ, stop!"

When his cries were unavailing, he climbed over the wall onto the floor of the arena. Unarmed, he tried to stop the men from using their weapons to kill each other. At first the crowd thought this was part of the show and began laughing. When they finally realized what was going on they became angry. Then one of the gladiators plunged a sword into his body. He fell to the sand, and his last words were, "In the name of Christ, stop!"

What followed was amazing: The gladiators stopped and stood over the man lying in the sand. A hush spread over the stadium. At last a man in the stands stood up and made his way to the exit. Others followed. In silence everyone left the stadium.

That was 391 A.D., and the last time gladiators fought to the death in the Roman Colosseum. The Emperor Honorius, learning of the martyrdom of Telemachus, put an end to that savage practice. One voice crying out, giving his life for his Christian beliefs, turned history that day.²

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²J. C. Ayer, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History*, p. 389; also from Randy Roth, Portland, Ore., in *Leadership*, Fall, 1986, p. 42.



The Board for Brotherhood Concerns of the Brethren in Christ Church, in cooperation with the Board for World Missions, organized a team of twelve persons to work and study for two weeks in Central America this past March. The team was ably led by Eleanor Poe, former missionary to Nicaragua. What follow are some reflections from members of the team as compiled by Esther Spurrier.

Dusk was falling as our bus crawled up and down the steep dirt roads. In the distance we could see a line of mountains which, the people told us, was the border between Honduras and Nicaragua. We didn't yet know for sure, but many of us had begun to suspect that this was the closest we would get to our intended destination. So close, and yet so far.

So who were we, and what were we doing on a bus in southern Honduras? After Hurricane Joan passed through Central America in the fall of 1988, destroying many homes and churches of our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua, the Board for Brotherhood Concerns (BBC) planned to send a team of builders and helpers from the North American churches to augment and "add flesh" to the financial aid they were sending for the relief efforts.

Now, nearly 18 months later, the plans were becoming a reality—almost. One of the participants, Karl, said, "Our group consisted of a mixture of ages, interests and personalities all joined together in Christian love." We were a retired camp director (Don Spurrier, Dillsburg, Pa. congregation); a retired farmer (Don Thrush, Mt. Rock, Pa., congregation); a retired school teacher (Karl Fretz, Port Colborne, Ont., congregation); a carpenter (Ken Krause, Bethel Community Church in Cassopolis, Mich.); a part-time registered nurse and mother of three (Eleanor Poe, Lancaster, Pa., congregation); a farmer (Ron Herr, Ulster, Pa.); a day-care worker and physical therapy aide (Kim Holloway, Carlisle, Pa., congregation); an earning VSer from the Bronx (Jeanne Hess); a Messiah College student (Keith Poe); an Oxford University graduate student (Doug Stevick); a mother of two teenagers (Esther Spurrier, Grantham, Pa., congregation); and, by his own description, an ex-drug addict garbageman (Jim Klosterman, Western Hills, Oh., congregation) who, by the grace of God is born again. "Thanks again to [BCC administrative director] Dave Brubaker" says Jim, "for just seeing the born again part."

So close

Honduras is not far from North America in geographic terms, but many differences impressed members of our group: "In both Belize and Honduras," Ron observed, "I was impressed with the unashamed, aggressive commitment the Christians have to Jesus Christ. They are outgoing evangelicals."

Don said, "Then there was church planter José León Herrera—what a man of God! Although saved for many years, he still has the enthusiasm of a new believer. All of his thoughts, words, and dreams seem to be related to the kingdom of God. Not only in church, but at the table, on the bus, while walking or sitting on the hillside, he sees people in their desperate need of Christ. He exhorts us Christians to prayer and the study of the Word, to a godly life and active outreach to the lost. Every other week he makes the 80-mile trip from the Colonia Kennedy congregation in the capital city of Tegucigalpa to his parents' home in El Capulín. There he meets with a group of believers whom he has led to the Lord, and does door-to-door visitation to share Christ with others. He hopes to build a church there. He took us with him last week—a seven-hour bus ride over the mountains, a three-hour church service with 120 people gathered around the community well under a huge ceiba tree, and a ten-and-one-half hour ride back to town. What a day!"

"The dedication of the Colonia Kennedy congregation astounded

The Central America Work/Study group in Tegucigalpa (left to right): Jim Klosterman, Kim Holloway, Ken Krause, Donald Thrush, Doug Stevick, Ron Herr, José León Herrera, Don Spurrier, Yolanda Herrera with Aaron and Rebecca, Keith Poe, Karl Fretz, Jeanne Hess, Esther Spurrier.

and yet . . .

by Esther Spurrier

me," said Kim. "Some walk one-half hour one way to come to services four evenings a week. When they pray, they address the Lord, 'my friend.' The love they have for the Lord is written on their faces."

The wisdom of the eldership was also impressive as they wrestled with our desire to do something for them: "I have to respect José León's desire," said Eleanor, "for his people to do the work of finishing the pulpit, painting the chairs and building the church building at El Capulín. The finished products will be more meaningful to them since they worked on them."

The genuine warmth of the hospitality was something we found hard to fathom. If I had 12 visitors who ended up staying with me for a week with very little advance notice, I'm not sure I could maintain an attitude of graciousness very long. But we never saw any trace of tension, annoyance or weariness-in-well-doing from José León's wife, Yolanda, and her sister, Virginia, as they cared for our every need. Others in the congregation, both rich and poor, contributed to making our stay comfortable: "From the ladies living on the hillside of Los Pinos who invited us in for a cup of coffee (which I'm sure they couldn't afford) to the more affluent in the city who opened their homes to us," said Don S., "we were treated like kings and queens! From those financially poor Christians living on Los Pinos, I learned anew the scriptural truth that life does not

consist in the abundance of the things we possess (Luke 12:15). They have so little of this world's goods but express the genuine joy of the Lord."

José León's life and testimony were especially meaningful to Jim: "I'm glad I got to meet José León and find out that I'm not unique. He told us that his family thought he was crazy after his conversion to Jesus Christ; mine had me committed to an institution for observation. We have been forgiven much, and we love much (Luke 7:47). This was encouraging to me; it was a little like seeing myself in a Spanish mirror. I, however, am just beginning to mature."

We were a diverse crew—so far

apart in many ways, and yet we became very close. "As we worked and played, ate, sang, prayed and traveled," Don S. explained, "God drew us together in a real bond of love. It reminded me of the days when I first came to know the Lord. There were about a dozen of us Christians living aboard a naval vessel with a crew of 600. Being a part of a family seems so very important when you don't speak the language of anyone outside the group."

We had begun this adventure with the expectation that we would be working to aid the Nicaraguan churches, and would be learning something about the region, the people, and the work of God in the process. Because we did not have Nica-



Mixing cement with shovels in Belize.

raguan visas when we left (except for Canadian Karl Fretz), we headed first for Belize and a work project organized by a Mennonite contact in that country. We were still hoping that our Nicaraguan visas would be issued within days.

"We found our new friends at Kings College, Belize, to be most appreciative of our efforts, as we mixed and poured 15 yards of concrete for the floor of their new administration building," said Karl. "Our project materials," Ken added,

"consisted of two wheelbarrows, 12 shovels, one small trowel, many bags of cement, many, many buckets of sand and fill, water and enthusiasm, bathed heavily in prayer. We proceeded to pour the floor *literally* by hand." It was probably the hardest physical work some of us had ever done. As Doug put it so aptly, "When I joined the group, I was surprised by the diversity in ages. I had expected a group of young, politically minded and involved activists. But I'm sure glad for the old guys in

the group; *they're* the ones who know how to work!"

After a few days, we moved on to Honduras to visit the newest Brethren in Christ churches and to continue our efforts to get Nicaraguan visas. "The question remains of why, in spite of all our efforts," wondered Eleanor, "we could not get to Nicaragua but had to send Karl alone. I do not know why God permitted Dave Brubaker to get together such a good team of builders, who wanted to work hard, when God knew what



A contra soldier pays a surprise visit. Tension is evident. How these people desire peace. Karl stands beside rarely-photographed military personnel in Nicaragua.

Why the Lord allowed me to go to Nicaragua, and chose not to have the U. S. personnel receive their Nicaraguan visas is yet an unanswered question.

I left the remaining eleven in Honduras with hugs, prayers, and a lonesome feeling, with the assurance that God would provide. A new country, new language, new people, new tasks to accomplish—new everything.

My overnight stay in Managua was followed by a four-hour bus ride, a four-hour truck ride, and a five-hour walk through twelve miles of hills to Santa Martha. Pastor Pedro Perez, tentmaker Nate Bert, and I arrived after dark at the home of Pastor José Gonzalez Silva. He, his wife, and

seven children welcomed us to their three-room home with abundant love. I was one of them immediately; I did as they did, ate as they ate, and joined in true fellowship minus verbal communication. Hugs, smiles, and touches made up for our lack of words.

During the five days that followed, I was able to help begin the construction of a small school near the Santa Martha church: rather crude work when we tried to fit the chain-sawn timbers together, but so much appreciated by our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters.

Contra soldiers visited the site. Sandinista military personnel travelled the main roads. How these people desire to have peace!

What a week of enrichment and rewards for me. The most difficult aspect of my visit was saying goodbye. Through Nate's interpretation, one brother asked, "Will you come back, and how soon can you come?"

As I reclined in my feed-sack bed during my last night at Santa Martha, I was kept awake by the flashing light of the smoky kerosene lamp. Fifteen-year-old Ebelio, Pastor José Gonzalez Silva's eldest son, was spending much time at the table, doing what I thought was school work. It seemed like a real effort. Just before we departed early the following morning, Ebelio handed me a letter written in Spanish: "For you, and the Canadian Brethren," Nate said.

I share with you through Eleanor Poe's translation one short paragraph, which I believe says it all: "Brother, I want you to feel well in Christ, because we are children of God, and we believe in him because he is the only one who keeps us from all sin, and he is for all people."

What a privilege is mine to be one of the twelve!

Karl Fretz



Merari and Jlocanda, daughters of José León and Yolanda, who shared their home with the group.

was going to happen. Concerning the work we did not do: if we had been able to give the Honduran church more advanced notice of our arrival, they could have been better prepared for us to help them get a building started for the rural congregation of El Capulín."

It was frustrating that our expectation of working hard to build a school in Nicaragua was not fulfilled. We looked around in Honduras and offered to do any building or repair work that the church elders in Colonia Kennedy (Tegucigalpa) could think of. As we responded to *their* initiatives, rather than to *our* own preconceived plans, a transformation took place—a transformation of people rather than of lumber and cement: "We changed," reflected Ron, "from an objective, high-energy, goal-oriented people to a group that was willing to develop emotional, spiritual and cross-cultural relationships with a group of strangers."

"We went to build buildings," said Kim, "but we ended up building relationships instead." Can it sometimes be true that to be far from our own plans and expectations is to be closer to the will of God?

Much more could be said of what impressed us: the lack of time-consciousness (the congregation waited for us for two hours the night we arrived in Tegucigalpa so we could worship with them); the special bond of love and mutuality there is between the people of very different socioeconomic strata who make up the Colonia Kennedy congregation; and how far our contribution of \$300 went in the work of building the church. (It bought wood for a pulpit, 75 wooden chairs for the two churches, paint, sandpaper and paid for transportation to get 50 of the

chairs out to El Capulín! What would \$300 buy for your church or mine?)

And the impact continues: "This was my first experience of being part of a trip that was so well-planned and then totally rearranged! It taught me to be more patient." (Don Thrush also learned much about adaptability and sharing when his suitcase was the only piece of luggage that never caught up with us; it was waiting for him in Shippensburg when he got home!) Contributions to Don Spurrier's trip fund totaled \$50 more than he needed to make the trip. So with that beginning, the Dillsburg congregation launched a project to buy a much-desired accordion for the Honduran churches, one of the listings in the *Brethren in Christ World Missions Partnership Handbook*.

Doug Stevick writes from England, "More than any particular memorable experience (and there were many of those), I take with me from our trip a deep sense of connectedness with my Honduran amigos. They opened their homes to us,

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The two Brethren in Christ churches in Honduras—one in Tegucigalpa and one in El Capulín—meet for an unforgettable worship time.



What is the "call" to ministry? Is it different from the call of God on all believers? How can one identify the call and know with certainty that it is genuine? The blend of vagueness and familiarity inherent in the "call" concept beckons diligent search for its meaning.

What is the call to ministry?

A look at the scriptural foundation of the call and at biblical characters who received and responded to a call will aid in answering the question. The concept of a call from God for a particular ministry is a recurrent theme throughout the Old and New Testaments. The details of the call to Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the disciples of Christ, and the Apostle Paul are familiar to the avid student of the Scriptures.

James R. Edwards correctly notes that after a careful study of the call received by the biblical characters, one can readily see that "the call of God is not something theoretical but rather an experience which results in inward moving." He cautions us not to focus unduly on the manner in which each call was manifested, lest we be misguided into believing that without an unusual experience, we have not received an authentic call. For, Edwards states, "the power of divine calling is not in how one is called but that one is called in the first place" (Edwards, p. 61).

Comparison/contrast with the call to all believers

It is necessary to distinguish between the call extended to all believers in Jesus Christ and that which sets apart men and women for godly servant/leadership roles within the church and the community.

Janet Peifer is on the pastoral staff of the Refton (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church. A student at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, she is in the second year of the Master of Divinity program. This article is condensed from a chapter of a book being prepared by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine for a 1991 release.

On receiving a call to ministry

by Janet M. Peifer

When addressing the Corinthian church, Paul wrote, "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (1 Cor. 1:9). All Christians are called by God to serve him in the age in which they live. B. C. Johnson states that "there is no distinction between the minister and the lay person with respect to the call to faith. Those who are called to ministry have previously been called to personal faith in Christ" (Johnson, p. 14).

But there is a distinction for the one receiving a call to vocational or professional ministry. Christ has given special gifts of leadership to the church (Eph. 4:11-13). The persons who fill the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher "equip the members of the body of Christ for their ministry of witness wherever they have been scattered in society" (Johnson, p. 13). They, like all other Christians, have received a call to faith in Jesus Christ; but their call extends to include a servant/leadership role in the church or community.

The distinction between the call of all believers and the call to ministry is *not* that the call to ministry is a "higher" calling than any other. Such hierarchical thinking breeds the misuse and abuse of power which fills volumes of revolting church history accounts destructive both to the honor of God and the church.

How does one identify the call to ministry?

Generally, theologians and pastors agree that the call of God comes

through two channels, i.e., the inner, personal or secret call and the outer or corporate call of the church. Both are necessary and serve as a quasi-checks and balances system to provide affirmation and assurance to the call to ministry.

The inner awareness of a call to ministry comes in as many ways as there are people who are called. It is an inner conviction that can begin as early as childhood, come during the teenage or young adult years or as late as mid-life. It is more than a feeling or a hunch that comes and goes. Rather, it is a God-given idea or compulsion that cannot be stilled by obstacles or time. One can try to ignore it, but at some point it must be reckoned with.

However that inner call manifests itself, the Word of God, says Lutzer, must confirm the inner call of God. "We have to ask whether a person has the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3," i.e., is one mature, possessing the needed gifts, a laborer in the Scriptures and free from any moral or doctrinal compromise? He points out that mistakes have been made when declaration of a call by a person was given deference over Scripture qualifications (Lutzer, p. 12).

Those sensing a call frequently sense even more keenly their own inadequacy. God does at times call "unlikely" people for ministry, thereby demonstrating that his plans are higher than those of his subjects. Conversely, unusual natural abilities should not be mistaken for the call to ministry.

A man or woman's personal aware-

ness and desire to serve the church does not solely constitute a call to ministry. The second way to identify the call is the recognition of the call by church or institutional leaders and peers, and lay leaders. George Brushaber, president of Bethel College and Seminary, writes, "Rarely does a true call to ministry come in the middle of the night. It comes out of the context of a local church—given by those who are able to discern the gifts, the abilities in the one wanting to serve" (Edwards, p. 63). Pastors, congregational leaders and faithful lay persons can and should become the discerners of ministerial gifts within persons in their congregation.

Frequently particular circumstances and events in one's life can aid in the recognition of a call. B. C. Johnson states that "the providential aspect of a call traces the handiwork of God in the events of one's life. On reflection a person discerns impressions, open doors, the response of friends, and a thousand 'funny little things' that confirm the call of God." Such reflection he believes "results in a conviction that God has destined one for ministry" (Johnson, p. 15).

How does one determine that the call is genuine?

The one who senses the call of God on his or her life would do well to look introspectively at personal motives. The desire to serve and build up the church or the kingdom of God must be paramount. James R. Edwards believes that "we may be assured of our calling by God when our motives for seeking authority and responsibility in the church are not based on personal ego needs (for example, desire for recognition or power over others), but when we sincerely sense God's command to build the church" (Edwards, p. 61). Thomas Oden states that frequently those who sense a call to pastoral ministry "are deeply troubled and dissatisfied with the church and society, yet it has been just this sense

of urgency and disquietude that has led them toward the call to ministry" (Oden, p. 17).

Repeatedly, authors encourage those who sense a call to ministry not to be in a hurry to arrive at the "final" verdict. Maturity and confirmation of a call come with time, testing and much prayer. Engaging in conversation with mature and trusted friends and persons in the field which one hopes to enter is crucial at this juncture.

Affirmation of a call frequently comes in conjunction with practice runs at ministry in the local church. The individual begins to see oneself in leadership roles that are modeled in the church and has the inner conviction that one's own contribution to a particular program or ministry could be blessed of the Lord to benefit the congregation. Blessed are those who find themselves in congregations which encourage the expression of their inner call and provide opportunities for those practice runs.

Involvement in the church or other Christian activity will do one of two things. Either it will add fuel to the conviction that one is called, kindling a desire for additional opportunities in service and training; or, it will reveal that one is not suited for vocational and professional ministry. Hands on experience will go a long way toward affirming whether or not one has been called of God, and can likewise prevent premature responses to a "not-sure call."

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So close . . .

continued from page 9

gave us their food, shared with us their lives—they showed to us genuine love and generous hospitality. Through our moments of laughter, earnestness and worship, we developed a bond of community that transcends culture and the Caribbean. I look forward to renewing these relationships sometime in the not-too-distant future."

Remaining connected through our support of our Honduran brothers and sisters in financial giving and through prayer is a goal of many of our group. Ken reflects, "Watching the multitudes at El Capulín made me think how Jesus walked to the other side of the mountain to rest. The work is so great that I wonder how José León is going to be able to shepherd this multitude. Prayer—the power of prayer—will be the key as God knows the plans he has for his people."

Kim exhorts, "It is my prayer that you will take an interest in Hermano José León and his churches. He needs our support in money and prayers."

José León himself expressed his assurance that it was the will of God that the group stayed in Honduras: "God was so good to me to send you here for my encouragement. Now I know you, and you know me, and you see the great need. You can pray and share with others in North America about the Brethren in Christ in Honduras—and about the great need and the opportunities all around us."

As our time in Tegucigalpa drew to a close, I kept hearing Psalm 133:1 from various sources: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" We are not living together any more. In fact, we are rather far apart. But that distance does not diminish the unity we feel because of our experiences together and because of the Spirit of God, which transcends all kinds of distances. So far? Perhaps. And yet so close!

San Francisco, California:

Lifeline update

by **Sharon Brunner and Luann Zercher**

Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter opened Sept. 1, 1989, after a two year and \$750,000 renovation. The value of the renovation became very apparent after the building withstood the 7.1 earthquake of October 17 with no structural damage. In fact, the survival of the building was credited to the renovation. Since opening, the shelter has been available to the San Francisco community for emergencies. Such an instance was an apartment house fire in the night that rendered 65 people in need of immediate shelter from the cold until the Red Cross could intervene. We were also standing by to assist in any way that we could for victims of the quake, and in fact now have a transitional resident still with us who was rendered homeless on October 17. We keep ourselves abreast of the homeless situation of the city by being in regular contact with other organizations that work with this population of people.

We were granted an occupancy permit August 30, 1989, that is good until August 30, 1990, enabling us to finish the very last requirement to receive a permanent permit. That requirement is simply to rework the back exit deck to city code, as well as some finish-up work in the basement kitchen. The cost to finish up should not exceed \$3,500. We trust God to provide the necessary funds not only to do this last bit of work, but also to provide the \$11,000 monthly income necessary to support this inner city mission work. We are only able to help a portion of the people in need in San Francisco, and we envision this ministry flourishing under God's supervision.

Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter has already become well-known in San Francisco. More and more church youth groups are getting involved in volunteering, cleaning, and yard work to help us.

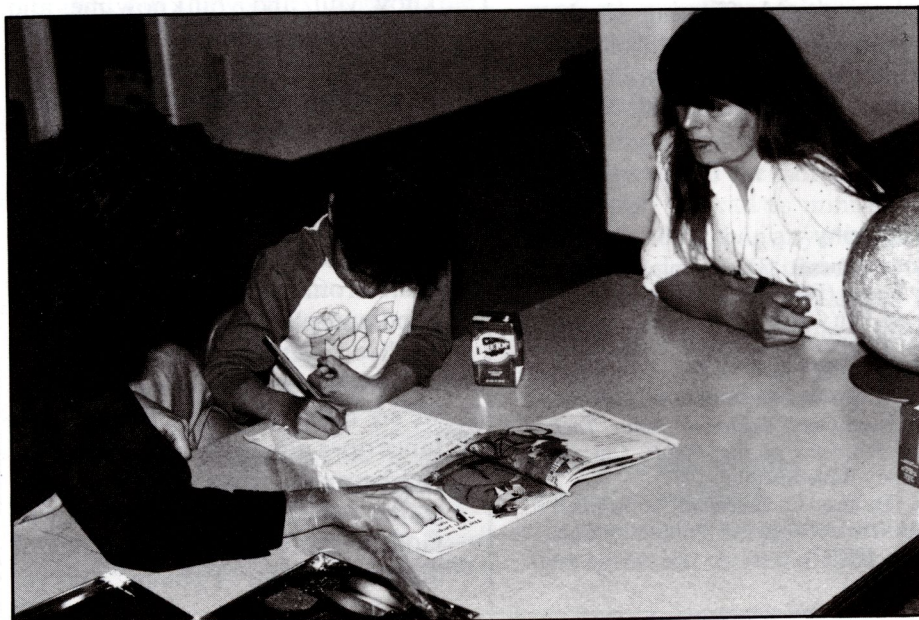
We also have numerous churches that contribute prepared meals to residents and staff. The Christian community is excited about having a ministry that focuses on preventing homelessness through housing in a spiritual environment which offers personally empowering programs designed to promote independent living. We offer chapel services, crisis counseling, career and job counseling, budget counseling, as well as children's programs including after-school tutoring. Our program is offered to drug and alcohol free women who are capable of working and who are in a crisis that could render them homeless. The average length of stay is three months. All of the people who leave Lifeline go into other good living situations rather than to other shelters or to the street. The numbers we have served since September 1, 1989, are:

Bed nights	3,000
meals	9,000
emergency food box meals	750
blankets and pillows	
given to homeless	150
crisis calls handled	800
volunteer hours contributed	2,150
graduates into independent living	10

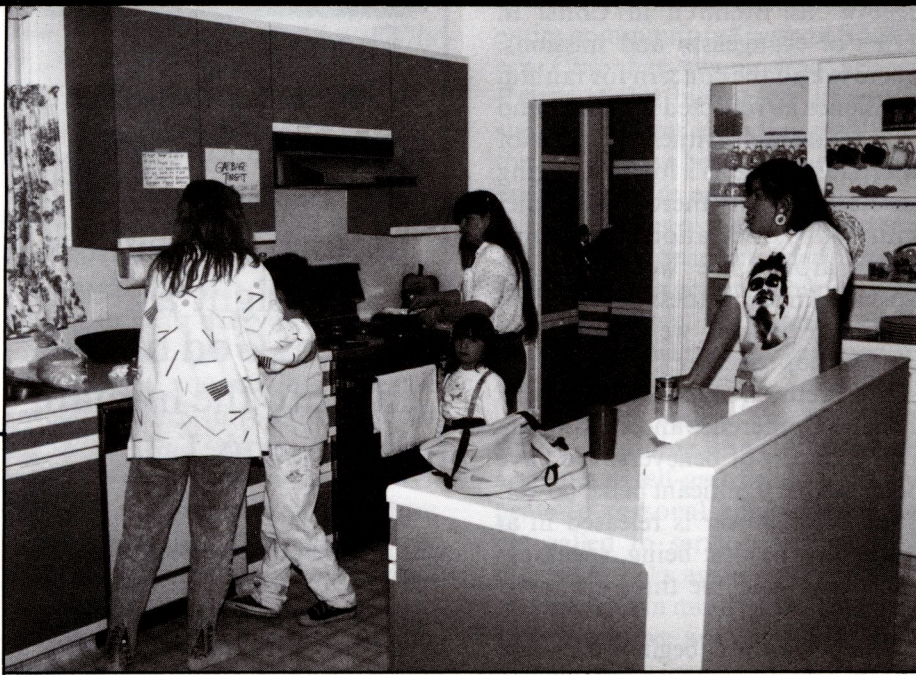
Maria's story

Maria is a young Hispanic mother of four children who speaks little English. Luann and I visited with Maria about the circumstances of her life and received permission to share her story with you.

Maria was born and raised in Mexico. She was one of six children. Maria's father died when she was four years old.



Working together on homework.



Three of the women in the shelter, with their children in the second floor kitchen.

Maria's mother worked hard by doing other people's laundry just to feed her children. Their diet consisted of only beans, rice and tortillas. Other people gave the children clothes, but they seldom had shoes to wear. Maria only attended school to the third grade because there was no money for pencils and paper. When Maria was 13, an older man named Lucio came and offered to take her, with the promise to support her. Maria was with the man for 17 years before being able to escape his abuses.

His promises were no good; she continued to live in poverty. Her first child, born prematurely, died after four hours because there was no money for a doctor. Maria believed strongly in God and would not abandon her relationship with Jesus even though it often angered Lucio. She prayed daily for strength to endure her life and asked God to deliver her from the evil deeds done to her. Finally, in the early fall of 1989, Lucio began to sexually abuse her in front of her children, who were 13, 11, 9, and 5. She fled, taking the children with her.

Maria and the children ended up in a terrible living situation; her only other choice would have been the streets. Maria said, "Every night I cried, and asked Jesus to help me and my chil-

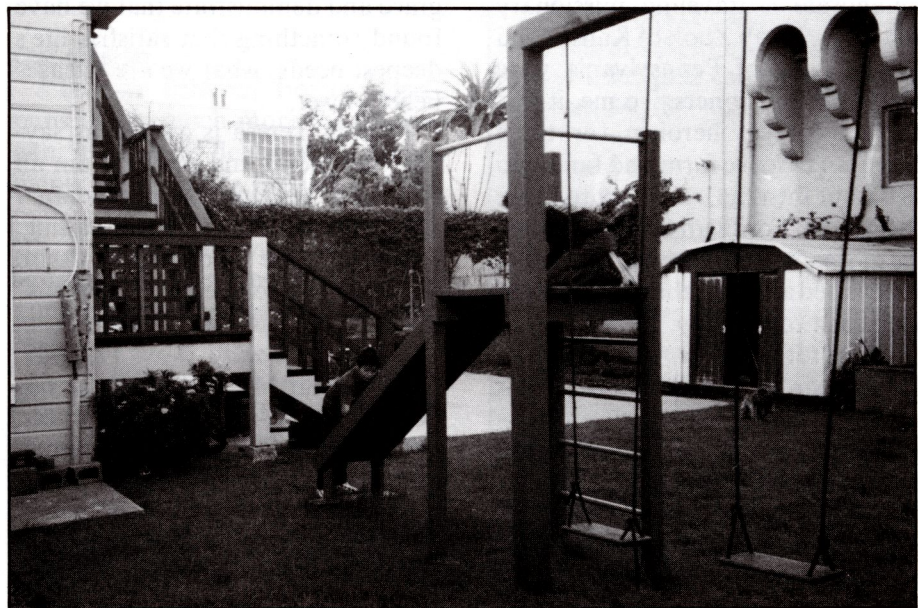
dren." Fortunately, a Christian social worker, who had become aware of Lifeline, helped her. Maria moved to Lifeline in January.

Maria said to us, "A long time ago I decided to put God first and to trust that he would help me with my life. Now at Lifeline, my children and I eat well. It is safe for us to sleep." She also said, "The children and I are very happy at Lifeline because God helps the people at Lifeline and they all love and help each other. I now have more courage to make decisions, and my children listen to me

more. I like going to church here at Lifeline, and the parties and special events for the children. Jesus says to help people and their children in need. If I had a lot of money I would give much to Lifeline so many more people could be helped."

We the staff are greatly blessed by Maria and her children. The children are all in school and Maria works as a domestic. She saves her money toward getting her own place to live. She regularly participates in the Chapel services as well as a Bible study.

We know there are many more Marias to be helped by Lifeline. You can help by becoming a regular supporter through prayer, monthly contributions, or perhaps even volunteer services. For more information, contact Lifeline Ministries, 424 Guerrero Street, San Francisco, CA 94110; telephone: 1-415-861-4820. ■



The play area in the back yard.

Belief power...

continued from page 5

If time allowed I should like to tell of Francis of Assisi in the 13th century, whose passionate devotion to God and service to humanity quickened Christian love among people in a time of formalism and ritual. I should like to tell of the Anabaptists, our spiritual ancestors, whose radical belief in the New Testament led them to seek to restore the model of the early church and work out the spirit of Jesus in the world of the 16th century. I should like to share the witness of the Clapham Group, who in 19th century England changed the face of the nation, living out their belief in the gospel, using their considerable wealth to promote missions and evangelism and struggle against slavery, illiteracy, and degradation.

And we Brethren in Christ are not without our own stories of living out "This we believe" in the nitty-gritty of everyday life and in courageous witness to those around us. Bear in mind that until fairly recently, we have been pretty much an ethnic people of German stock making our living by farming. Our church programs operated on minimum budgets and ministers were self-supporting. In 1888, a bit more than 100 years after the beginning of the denomination, General Conference decided to inaugurate a traveling missionary program. Noah Zook of Kansas and Avery Long of Pennsylvania were chosen as missionaries. To me, it was an act of real heroism for these brethren to leave farm and family to head out into the unknown to share the gospel. For them Owosso, Michigan, was "the unknown." The faith was shared and churches were planted that exist to this day.

The story of the beginnings of Brethren in Christ missions overseas in 1897 needs no repetition. The expansion of our missions program testifies to the declaration "This we believe." In fact, the children are now greater in number than the parent body in North America. And the children instruct the parents.

Not only do we speak of "This we believe" as Brethren in Christ in terms of evangelism and missions. There is also the concern for faithful obedience as reflected by those who have made their witness in forms of alternate service as a form of waging peace. With this there is the quiet witness of participation in relief programs around the world. Indeed, we have made witness to what we believe in the way we have walked our journey together.

We Brethren in Christ here at this General Conference and at home are a community of believers. We have potential for significant belief power. That belief power is released in at least three modes: being, speaking, and doing, and the three are intertwined.

Our belief power begins with *being*. John's concern was that "... you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." The underlying word, *pisteuo*, is used 98 times in the Gospel. It speaks of personal commitment leading to new life. This is life with a new quality issuing in changed people. It has been incorporated into the Brethren in Christ message from the beginning: Christ within through faith changes us so that we are not what we were. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are new creatures, being formed into Christ-likeness. When our new lives reflect his love and grace and demonstrate that we have found something that satisfies life's deepest needs, what we are releases belief power.

Mother Teresa is quoted as saying: "By blood and origin, I am all Albanian. My citizenship is Indian. I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the whole world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to Jesus" (Quoted by Ruth A. Tucker, from *Christianity Today*, Nov. 17, 1989, p. 44). What Mother Teresa is, has been a world-influencing witness. When we "belong entirely to Jesus" our witness will release belief power too.

What applies to the individual applies to the church, the Christian community, as well. Christ active

The release of Christian belief power is particularly seen in moments of witness and insight as gifts of God breaking into the human experience.

within the body creates a fellowship that moves with a power greater than the sum of its individual members. It is a thrilling reality to see a congregation of people in love with Christ and soundly led impact a community and transform lives and homes. A Sunday at Nkulumane Church in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, illustrated this to me. This church, begun around 1982, is reportedly the fastest-growing congregation among the Brethren in Christ in the world, with 700-800 in attendance. The day began with a prayer meeting in which brothers and sisters shared how Christ had changed their relationships, helped in finding jobs, and made life new in other ways. Bible study followed the prayer meeting, and Sunday school followed Bible study. Then came the worship service, translated to us by loving brothers, but the spirit of the service needed no translation: it was alive with the dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

The authors of a recent work, *Resident Aliens*, address the concern of Christian community: "... American Christians have fallen into the bad habit of acting as if the church really does not matter as we go about trying to live like Christians. ... Christian community is not primarily about togetherness. It is about disciplining our wants and needs in congruence with a true story, which gives us the resources to lead truthful lives. In the process of living out the story together, togetherness happens, but only as a by-

Evangelical Visitor

product of trying to be faithful to Jesus.” (Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon in *Christianity Today*, Mar. 5, 1990, p. 16, 18). The church *does* matter and what it is can release Christian belief power.

Belief power finds release in *speaking*. We are bombarded these days with a great proliferation of words so that we are almost inoculated against their impact. Still, “. . . it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:10). Our words affect us. And words well-timed, well-chosen, and Spirit-directed release belief power that moves others toward God. In the long run our words reveal what “This we believe” really is, and so we pray that our lips may be guarded and guided in what they express. This is both simple and complex: simple in that the everyday communication in our homes, on the job, and in the church is making a witness for good or ill; complex in that we have the challenge of effective communication of the gospel of Christ’s love in the midst of the plethora of words continuously poured into our ears. On the one hand, we are called simply to tame our tongues as the third chapter of James counsels us. On the other hand, we need to develop attractive materials and use modern technologies to appealingly deliver the words and message of life to a media-satiated generation.

By our words we may and must call people to belief. In the most recent meeting of the Council on Ministry and Mission, Dale Shaw shared a word that has remained with me. He judged that we tend to do well as sociologists, theologians, and counsellors, but we have trouble asking people for commitment—commitment to salvation, to giving, to serving. I think Dale is right—and he is calling us to release belief power with words that invite people to decisive action for God.

Finally, belief power is released in *doing*. As I write these words (May 17, 1990), the young son of one of the pastors in my conference is fighting for his life in a Dayton hospital. Stephen was suddenly taken to the

hospital Monday evening, four days ago, with ominous symptoms. The entire community of faith in Southern Ohio has swung into action: Prayer chains have been activated, support systems including meals for the family have been engaged, cards expressing care and support are in the mail, offers of whatever help can be given have been extended. That is belief power in action. It happens all over the church. Ardis and I experienced it powerfully a year ago in our time of great need.

“This we believe” is a call to action—to doing. In a culture which accentuates self-gratification and appeals to personal achievement, we are called to service and sacrifice that takes risks against present evils and engages in ministry that demonstrates that we are committed to a higher calling. I am fascinated with a group of men in Dayton, Ohio, who function under the name “Christian Men Against Drugs.” They take a stand for God by their name against an evil that is destroying their children and their community. They believe something—and they act accordingly. I was impressed by medical doctors in our hospitals at Macha and Mtshabezi who could have received incomes in six figures elsewhere, but their belief in God who loves and shows it in action called them to ministry and witness to those who suffer. God is calling us to *do* in Jesus’ name and for his purposes.

Conclusion

“This we Believe.” For us Christians this is much more than a slogan; it’s a set of deliberate commitments by which we live. It’s a roadmap to take us where we want to go. It’s a connection with the power-source that energizes us for living out the life that comes through belief in Jesus.

One New Year’s Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company.

With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas (Steve Blankenship in *Leadership*, Winter 1985, p. 49).

Belief power: That is relating “This we Believe” to the power-source, the living Christ so as to *be, say, and do* the things that reflect Christ’s life in us. This we shall do by the Spirit’s power in a new and confused context, sharing the power of belief in Christ, releasing Christian belief power to the glory of God.

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A.D.O.P.T. a missionary

by Audie Gaddis

We were adopted missionaries. Some missionaries are not adopted; they are discarded.

Discarded missionaries are often forgotten. You'll find them on the prayer calendars and mission maps. Yet we lose track of what's happening in their lives. We forget they're struggling to serve Jesus Christ hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles from home.

Adopted missionaries know they have friends to turn to at all times. They have supporters who do more than write a check. Should they fall, a caring friend will rally behind them.

Discarded missionaries wonder where their friends have gone. Their home church sent them off as heroes. But does the church regard them as heroes now? Why doesn't anyone respond to their prayer letters? After a while such feelings of isolation may add to the other struggles they experience. The results? One missionary quit when he concluded no one back home really cared.

Many of us never go to the steamy jungles, the tropical island, or the Appalachian village. But by adopting a missionary we do the next best thing. When our adopted missionary wins someone to Christ, we wit-

nessed too. When they plant a new church, we planted with them. When they save a village from a killer disease, we healed, too.

You can serve missionaries in what I call the ADOPT method, a how-to approach to get involved in missions without leaving home.

ANSWER God and that missionary letter. We think missionary letters are just to fill us in on the latest news around the compound. In reality, they're echoing the Macedonian call, "Come over and help us" (Acts 16:9). Since everyone can't come, missionaries paraphrase it, "If you can't come over, help us on the home front!"

God intends for us to help his missionaries do the work. We're all on the same team, called to witness for Jesus Christ in this world.

Here's what you can do.

Choose a single missionary or a missionary family you can build a friendship with. Contact Brethren in Christ World Missions Office, P.O. Box 390, Mount Joy, PA 17552. They'll direct you to a missionary in need of a caring friend.

Perhaps there's a country you have an interest in. Select a missionary serving in that country. If you like sports, find a missionary who ministers via athletics. The same is true for any interest. They can show us how to use our hobbies and careers as a witness for Jesus Christ.

Next, write to your missionaries. Explain your intentions to be more involved in their work. When word got out that we were going into missions, Grey got excited. He helped us prepare our prayer letters complete with his photography skills, and prayed for us daily. Throughout our term we knew we could count on Grey's support.

DASH a spoonful of fun! In Brazil you sacrifice the multi-colored beauty of an Ohio autumn. One missionary ached for a fall view of her Ohio home. A wise supporter mailed her a package of autumn leaves. Silly? Not to the missionary. A bundle of leaves lifted her spirits and encouraged her in her work. Eternity will prove how many lives were touched because a missionary was lifted up by a few Ohio leaves.

Send laughter through the mail. Missionaries, like all of us, need a few laughs. Send simple cards with humorous messages. Change a missionary's day with a few good laughs.

Subscribe to a magazine for them. A North American magazine helps overseas missionaries feel closer to home. A magazine devoted to their hobby or interests will minister to your missionary in many ways. One elderly friend subscribed to two magazines for us. These gifts made us feel as though a bit of heaven came our way every month.

Send cassette tapes of church services, concerts, teaching series, or of your family. One church mailed us tapes of their weekly services and disciplined us through the mail. Have a family talent night; record it and ship it to your missionary. Your missionary will remember it for years to come.

Be creative. Dash a heaping spoonful of fun and your friendship will last forever.

OPEN and close your heart. Open your heart to their needs. Pray for your missionary daily. Or set aside a special time each week to

Audie Gaddis pastors the Dayspring congregation, a new Brethren in Christ church in Harrisonburg, Va.

pray for your missionary. Place their pictures where it will remind you to pray. Since I enjoy eating, the refrigerator door serves as the best display case for missionary photos.

Drop your spare coins in a missionary piggy bank. Share your love through your wallet. One couple fasts regularly to save money for mission projects.

I found it difficult to share with my supporters any financial need. I feared they would see me as a faithless "beggar." Since then I've learned that missionaries share their financial needs because missions are a team effort. Our supporters wanted to know how to minister to our money needs.

Besides opening your heart, close your heart. Distance can sometimes open the doors for misunderstanding. Don't expect a busy missionary to answer every letter.

Mark, a missionary friend, is not a letter writer. Yet when he does I know it came from the heart. He would much rather work, but he sacrificed the time to share.

Close your heart to any criticisms of your missionary. Don't expect them to be something they're not. Accept them as friends with no conditions. Rather than criticize, communicate with your missionary and you will be better for it.

By opening and closing your heart you'll have a friendship for all seasons.

PROVIDE and improvise. I was devastated. I was assigned to salvage a church on the verge of collapse and I failed. I could not stop the inevitable. I felt I had let down my congregation, my mission board, and my supporters. I had taken my family hundreds of miles from a secure home only to face disaster. I doubted myself, my calling, and my God.

Paul and Mary Lou sensed the pain, and rallied behind us. They moved in to pick up the pieces and brought healing to our family. When

we were transferred, they were there to load the moving van.

Suppose your missionary has some deep needs? What do you do if they're so discouraged they want to throw in the towel?

Provide for them at this time by listening. Rather than advice, they may need a shoulder to cry on, someone to hear them out.

You need not be a trained counselor. They came to you because you have something special—love. Help them carry their burden. If they send you a letter expressing their pain and sorrow, return a quick note assuring them of your love and prayers. Invest in a short phone call, if possible. Your caring voice can make their day.

Provide the most of what you can, friendship. Improvise on the rest with a listening ear and a prayerful heart.

TREAT and trick. When my family and I were in missions, we were often homesick. Since friendships can fade with distance, losing the closeness of a friend cuts into the homesick heart.

We tried to maintain our friends back home. But distance proved a barrier to many. Yet we received the treats that came in the form of adopted friends. They filled the gaps of loneliness and ministered to us as we ministered to others.

What's the trick? The key to missions is not so much of ability as it is availability. It's the same for adopting missionaries.

Your willingness to be a missionary to a missionary is the trick. When you say no to the distance barrier and yes to the commitment of a new friend, you are providing a needed ministry.

Sharing in God's work in the world is the treat. Do our missionaries need us? Do we need them? Do we need missions? If we answer yes to these questions, it's time to adopt a missionary. ■

Missions position for Philip Keefer



Rev. Philip D. Keefer has accepted the invitation from Brethren in Christ World Missions to serve as Secretary for Church Relations, effective July 1, 1990.

Phil has been serving as Director of Planned Giving for the Brethren in Christ Church, a position which has allowed him to feel the heartbeat of most churches in the brotherhood. He has also served as pastor of the West-heights and Sherston congregations in Ontario, Canada.

Phil's interest in missions blossomed when he entered the pastorate in 1979. At that time, he became aware of the need for the home church to be reaching out in obedience to the Great Commission. He has served on the Board for World Missions since 1986. Additionally, he has been active in his home congregation (Grantham, Pa.) and has served at the regional conference level of both the Allegheny and Canadian Conferences.

As Secretary for Church Relations, Phil's vision includes several hopes: to share the opportunities which are ours in Brethren in Christ World Missions to be witnesses for Jesus Christ even to the uttermost parts of the earth; to communicate the privilege which is ours to give in our plenty to meet the needs of others through world missions and Co-operative Ministries; and to increase our vision regarding our responsibility for making disciples of all nations as an integral part of the mission of the Brethren in Christ Church. He has greatly appreciated the warmth and receptivity of Brethren in Christ pastors and people, and looks forward to further interaction with pastors and leaders of local congregations.

Phil replaces Rev. Louis O. Cober, who will serve as bishop of the Pacific and new Southeast Conferences (pending General Conference confirmation).

We welcome Phil and his wife, Judy, and their sons (Dan and Bart in Canada and Jared at home) to the Brethren in Christ World Missions staff. ■

God at work in our world

"I did not intend to start a church there"

José León—church planter in Honduras (a translation)

The Brethren in Christ Church here in Honduras is now a fact, thanks to our Creator. The church here in Tegucigalpa is very happy to know that we have brethren who are concerned about us. We thank God for this. . . .

Here in Honduras I have gone through my difficult moments. I do not lie before God nor my brothers in Christ; I have cried intensely and felt very much alone since it is not easy to care for two new churches at the same time. It started this way: when I came from Nicaragua I went to visit my parents whom I had not visited for 14 years. Thank God, they are still living. When I arrived, the people of the neighboring communities came to see me since I was the son of Desiderio Herrera, and I told them about things they had not known before. In my mind, I did not have interest in starting a work in the community of El Capulín where my parents, other relatives and brothers live. My idea was only to start a work here in the capital; but when I saw how interested the people were to hear the word of the Lord, I preached to them and they continued with a lot of interest listening to the message of God. I saw that among these were three delegates (trained men), who worked with the priests, and these showed interest in listening to the message and now they are Brethren in Christ and also community leaders with the message of God for the lost. In this way, the (Brethren in Christ) church in El Capulín, village San Romón, Liure, Department of el Paraizo, was born.

The brothers of El Capulín are very thankful for the Brethren in Christ from the United States who visited them in their own community of El Capulín. Our brothers and sisters who traveled with our sister Eleanor (Poe) made a donation to that community of 50 chairs which they are using now in their meetings, but even these are not enough for all the people who are interested in hearing the counsel of our Creator.

. . . With this I want to tell you to tell that group of people who pray for the churches in the world that I person-

ally can say that the Lord is hearing their prayers. The work here in Honduras is due in part to their prayers. Now we feel more confident and strong since we know that there is a great number of brothers and sisters in Christ who are interceding with their prayers for our ministry which God had entrusted to us here in Honduras.

Confiscated by the poor

Lois Raser—Compassion International, Guadalajara, Mexico

One of the southern hills which rings the immense city of Guadalajara has been confiscated by the poor. As one approaches from the city itself, this hill, with thousands of houses crowded together on lots of about 20 x 60 feet, sprawls low against the sky. One sees a great spread of unfinished, unstuccoed, homemade brick or cement block structures with two or three rooms, housing a large family.

From afar, amid the maze of murky earth colors, a large bright yellow sprawling structure provides the only light color on the hillside. It is our "Center."

In this area, the tourist's Guadalajara is barely known. Amid the morass of sin, vice and abuse, women scrounge for gas, water and milk; men for drink and money. Youth scrounge for drugs; the children for someone to smile at them. There are so many of them.

The schools (including our children's) have up to 90 pupils packed into one bare classroom with one bored, disillusioned teacher. Some children, as our Samuel, must carry their own bench to school.

We are in the middle of all this. To receive 250 children, feed them and teach them about God is only a drop in the bucket, but it is something. To receive a handful of disoriented couples in the services, and see the men—who have beaten and betrayed the women who sit beside them—listening attentively and with surprise to the message, is something. Merely to climb up and down the hilly rocky streets with them, tired and carrying burdens like them, praying as we look at them, must be worth something.

So we are here and you are here with

us and we thank you. Our nine children have shared your love and we thank you for their part also. May this beginning of a new decade be a time of thanksgiving, and hope, for us all!

Easter Jesus

(From a missionary who teaches English to first grade children in an international school)

"Okay, children, let's write a story." Sighs are heard as they know they need to write 10 sentences.

"What is the title of the story?"

"Easter."

The sighs turn to claps. "Yeah, Jesus!" In a class predominantly Buddhist, such claps brought me incredible joy.

As the children wrote, I noticed that some changed the title to: Easter Jesus. The following are some of their unedited stories. As you read, may their joy be your joy as you reflect on the Easter Jesus of your heart.

"The angles told the shepherds and wisemen go to Bethlehem. They followed a big bright star. They found Jesus in the manger. They gave Jesus presents. Jesus helped people. he love everyone. King Herod wanted kill Jesus die. He helped people to be good. One robber changed his mind. Jesus said you will go to heaven with me!"

"Jesus was angles told shepherds and wisemen fallowed stars. They found Jesus and gave him presents. When Jesus died in the cross his friends are very very sad. But Jesus was anything wrong. Jesus was born in a manger. An angle said "Don't be afraid. Jesus is not here. He is risen." said angle. After 3 more days Jesus was really come! That night Jesus talked to friends at Galilee. The next day Jesus came back. 40 days after Easter Jesus met his friends on a nountain in Galilee. He said "Go tell everyone in every country about Jesus."

"When Jesus grew up evary people listen to Jesus. Jesus said he is the only king. The other king said I want to kill Jesus. One day Jesus went to his friends house. Then Judas went to tell the bad king where is Jesus. Jesus help the sick people. When Jesus died everypeople is sad. When Jesus died the air shook. Jesus said to his friend I three days will come back."

YOUTHquest

From The Tamiment Record: A Special Report

AP — Over 700 youth are gearing up for **YOUthQuest Ninety**, a Brethren in Christ Youth Convention to be held in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania from **December 27 to December 30, 1990**. The theme for the convention focuses on every young person's quest for meaning in life.

Official sources report that the main speaker will be Dwight Robertson, a favorite of Christian youth across the continent. Other features include small group interaction, electives, recreational activities, and a concert by the Christian singer, Steve Camp. With this schedule, members of the planning committee expect to surpass last convention's total of over 750.

Look for further up-date of this exciting convention in future issues of this paper.



*For more information, contact: The Board for Congregational Life
P.O. Box 163
Mount Joy, PA 17552
(717) 653-9321*

But hurry—early registration discounts end November 28, 1990. And this youth convention only happens once every three years.

Church News



Kershner ordained

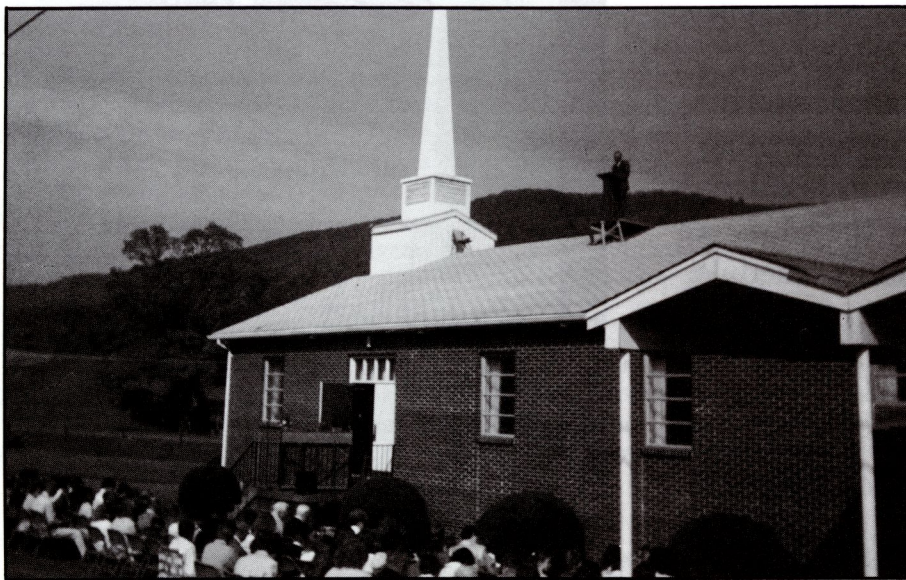
Tom Kershner was ordained to the Christian ministry on Sunday, April 22, 1990. Owen Alderfer, bishop of the Central Conference, was in charge of the service, held at the Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Brethren in Christ Church.

Pastor Kershner has been serving the Pleasant Hill congregation since July 1988. Prior to his coming to Ohio, he served as a youth pastor for five years in Waynesboro, Pa.

Pastor Kershner completed his undergraduate training at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. in 1979, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Religion degree. In May 1983, he received his Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky.

He and his wife Lynne have two children, Matthew, four, and Mellisa, two.

The ordination sermon was preached by Lynn Thrush, senior pastor of the Fairview Avenue Brethren in Christ Church in Waynesboro, Pa. Assisting in the service was Rev. Tara Hornbacker (Church of the Brethren), Rev. Donald Kanet (United Church of Christ), Rev. Bob Westfall (First Brethren Church) and Rev. Mike Short, all of Pleasant Hill.



Pastor John L. Bundy announced to his congregation at Cedar Heights (Mill Hall, Pa.) that if there were 175 or more persons present for the Easter worship service and Friends Day on Sunday, April 15, he would preach from the church rooftop on Sunday, May 6, rain or shine. When the Easter worship service was dismissed, it was revealed that the challenge had been met on the part of the congregation, with a total of 182 persons present.

On Sunday, May 6, preparations were complete, including a platform secured firmly on the rooftop of the church, a lectern placed on the platform, a chair for the pastor, and a high ladder ready for the ascent to the roof. The Lord provided a beautiful morning, perfect for an outdoor worship service. The ushers arrived early to set up chairs. People came earlier than they had ever come to the service before, knowing that their faithful pastor would keep his promise to them. By 9:30 a.m., 128 persons had come to watch and listen to this unusual event. Pastor John had the delightful privilege of presenting an evangelistic message using the theme, "Utterly Revealing" Luke 12:1-10.

Allegheny Conference

The **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., had a May 27 picnic, featuring a chalk-drawn gospel lesson by Wilbur Stayman, and an interview of Lewis Brantner about his service in Peru. • On May 6-8, the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg, hosted a prophecy conference with author Grant Jeffrey. • A mixed quartet from God's Bible School sang on Mar. 6 for the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa. Deb Patrick, missionary to Colombia, spoke on June. 7. • The **Canoe Creek** congregation, Hollidaysburg, Pa., honored its graduates with a June 4 banquet. • The **Carlisle**, Pa., church reports participation in the Bibles for India Grow Project. On June 3, members received a new \$10 bill which they are to multiply and return for missions outreach.

On May 6, the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., observed Children's Day with the presentation of the musical "Fat, Fat Jehoshaphat." A prayer partners seminar was held May 18-19 with Bill and Marianne Klassen. • The second annual volunteer appreciation dinner was held May 12 by the **Cedar Heights** congregation, Mill Hall, Pa. Tom Frantz spoke on "When God Gives Out the Rewards." • On May 19-20, the youth of the **Chambersburg**, Pa., church viewed the film series "Molder of Dreams" and led the morning worship service. • On May 20, Louis Cober spoke about missions to the **Colyer** congregation, Centre Hall, Pa. A fellowship meal followed. • On May 6, Paul Hostetler gave the media presentation, "People of God . . . Reaching Out Together" to the **Cumberland Valley** congregation, Dillsburg, Pa.

On May 27, the **Dillsburg**, Pa., congregation had a DERF (devotions, eats, recreation, fellowship) meeting with a report from Eleanor Poe, Keith Poe, Don Thrush, and Don Spurrier about their Honduras trip. • The **Fairview Ave.** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., planned a June 16 picnic at Jerome King Park in Greencastle. The teens traveled on May 12 to Washington, D.C., to visit a shelter for the homeless. • Five persons were received on May 20 into the membership of the **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro. The church planned a hike and picnic for June 24 at Mont Alto Park. • Mim Stern spoke at the last Women's Salad Supper of the year for the **Grantham**, Pa., church. The junior choir gave their spring concert on May 6, entitled "God's Great Big Beautiful World."

The **Green Spring** church, Newville, Pa. has a new handicap access ramp. The youth and their parents met May 11 for a fun night at the Mifflin gym. • The **Hollowell** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., had a May 11-13 Family Emphasis weekend with David and Marcy Alves of Frontline Ministries. • On June 10, Bishop Kipe was with the **Iron Springs** congregation, Fairfield, Pa., to conduct a pastoral expression and to speak. • Allen Kipe sang in the May 20 service of the **Marsh Creek** congregation, Howard, Pa. • David and Dorcas Climenhaga led a family life conference in May for the **Martinsburg**, Pa., congregation. • The **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., church reports an average attendance during the winter months of over 400. The congregation is studying the possibility of a third Sunday school hour.

On May 9, the choir of the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church gave a concert for the **Messiah Village** church, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Tim Fretz spoke on May 22 about his MCC service. • On May 14, Si and Betty Lehman showed slides to the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., of their trip to Venezuela. • On June 3, the **Morning Hour Chapel** congregation, East Berlin, Pa., had a grad-

uation dinner and the movie "Ordinary Guy." • May was family month at the **Mt. Rock** church, Shippensburg, Pa. On May 24, the church hosted a stewardship promotion seminar for area churches focusing on the stewardship of people resources and gifts. • On May 12, the women and friends of the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., hosted a "spring fling" with Pat Hultman on the theme "Fitness of the Soul, Fitness of the Body." The youth presented a series of skits in the May 6 worship hour for Youth Day.

The **Paramount** congregation, Hagerstown, Md., planned a June 23 photo session for their new pictorial directory. • The **Redland Valley** congregation, York Haven, Pa., planned a guess-who's-coming-to-dinner on May 5. • On May 6, Mark Witman spoke to the **South Mountain Chapel** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa., on "A Christian Businessman's Testimony." • The **Springhope** congregation, Everett, Pa., had a centennial celebration on May 19-20. Speakers were John Rosenberry, C. B. Byers, Hubert Stern, Lloyd Melhorn, Kenneth Mackie, and Bishop Kipe. • The **Van Lear** congregation, Williamsport, Md., held their June 10 worship service at Doub's Woods. • Sharon Weisser spoke for the May 8 mother-daughter banquet of the **Wesley** church, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa. • Carl Shenk from Carlisle, Pa., led renewal services May 6-9 for the **West Shore** congregation, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Atlantic Conference

On Apr. 29, Rev. Samuel and Dorothy Brubaker were honored with a farewell fellowship meal at the **Conoy** church, Elizabethtown, Pa., before moving to Messiah Village. • Tim Fretz was missions speaker on May 27 for the **Cross Roads** church, Mount Joy, Pa. He has served most of the past decade in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, using his degree in crop science and international agriculture. • The youth of the **Fairland** church, Cleona, Pa., sponsored a chicken barbecue on May 12. Graybill Brubaker spoke at a father-son breakfast on June 17. • Phil Keefer gave a will clinic May 30 at the **Free Grace** church, Millersburg, Pa. Peter and Gayle von Keyserling were guests for the May love feast weekend.

Ten new members were received and three baptized on June 3 into the **Hershey**, Pa., church. • The youth of the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla., participated in the May 11 YFC lock-in at Wet and Wild. The congregation held a hymn sing on May 20. • On May 27, Bishop Byers preached to the **Hummelstown**, Pa., congregation on "Motion or Mission." The Hartman Harmonies led revival services June 3-6. • The May 4 mother-daughter banquet of the **Lancaster**, Pa., church was "Hee Haw" with entertainment by the Lonesome Four. • On May 12, the youth of the **Manor** church, Mountville, Pa., held a babysitting night at the church to raise funds for their summer mission trip to St. Croix. Senator Gibson Armstrong spoke at the May 19 men's breakfast.

On May 6, David and Dorcas Climenhaga reported to the **Mastersonville** congregation, Mannheim, Pa., on their recent service in Zimbabwe. The congregation enjoyed a musical program on May 20 by the youth of the **Fairland** church. • The **Millersville**, Pa., church recently sought the Lord's direction in the matter of a land purchase decision. • Fifteen persons were received as members and four baptized on May 20 into the **New Covenant** church, Quakertown, Pa. • On May 23, the Wednesday evening children's ministry of the **Palmyra**, Pa., church had a closing program with speaker

Atlantic MPF meets April 28

The 31st annual meeting of the Atlantic Conference Missions Prayer Fellowship took place at the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church in Souderton, Pa., on Saturday, April 28, 1990. The theme was "Reaching the World . . . Prayer Can Make a Difference."

Miriam Stern opened the meeting with experiences showing the need for prayer; she presided throughout the day. The keynote speaker was Mary Gay from Philadelphia, Pa; a leader in

intercessory prayer. Other speakers included Mark and Nan Garis, Doris Fretz, Walter Knight, Patty Winters, Donald and Shirley Frymire, Rachel Phiri and Mike Blouse.

The group was led in a special prayer time for Brethren in Christ Missions by John Hart from the Pequea congregation. An offering of \$906.00 was received for the Missions Prayer Fellowship in Honduras. Next year's officers are Ruth Zook, president; Mark Garis, vice-president; Kelly Winters, treasurer; and Andrea Hoke, secretary. — *Shari Steager, MPF secretary.*

Mrs. John Imboden. Four persons joined the church on May 27. • The **Pequea** church, Lancaster, Pa., recently had an eight-week series of lessons on the biblical understanding and practical application of spiritual gifts. Bijoy and Manjula Roul of India spoke on May 23.

The youth of the **Refton**, Pa., church sponsored a spaghetti supper on May 12 with funds going to various missions projects and a summer outreach to the **Dayspring Covenant** church, Harrisonburg, Va. • In early May, the children of the **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., made birthday cards to send to "missionary kid" Peter Giles. Pastor Reitz received a Doctorate of Ministry from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary on May 19. • After a fellowship meal on May 20, the members of the **Stowe**, Pa., congregation wrote letters to missionaries.

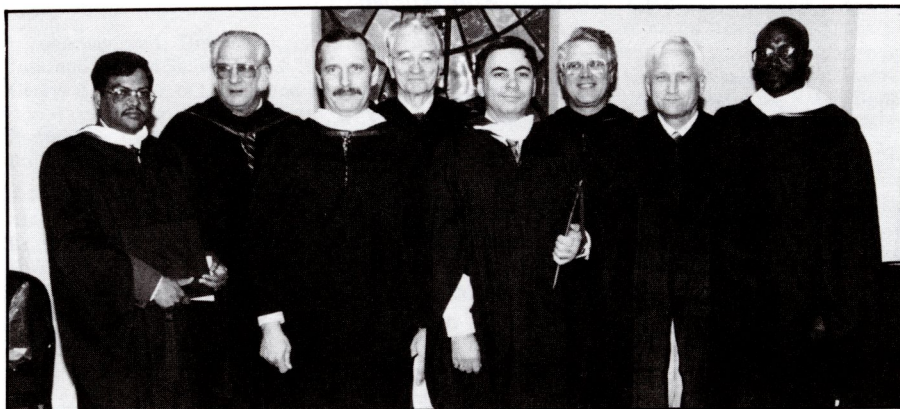
Canadian Conference

The **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont., planned a bake sale for June 2. • The **Delisle**, Sask., congregation had a Sunday school camp-out weekend, May 25-27, at Pike Lake. The adult Sunday school recently viewed the "Out of the Salt Shaker" video series. • On May 27, the **Falls View** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont., celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Sunday school. June 3 was Tim Fretz "welcome home day." • On May 6, John and Robin Steckley showed slides to the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont., telling of their recent ministry in Mali, West Africa. • Three young women of the **Houghton** church, Langton, Ont., are doing summer service with Youth Mission Canada, SPRINT, and Campus Crusade. • The **Kindersley**, Sask., congregation planned a rummage, craft, and bake sale on June 1-2 in support of MCC relief.

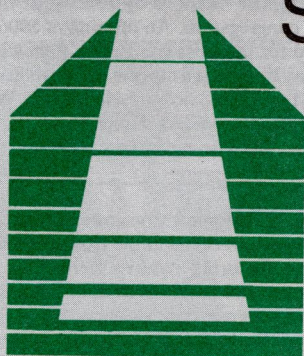
A total of 128 people (67 visitors) attended a May 4-5 missions weekend at the **Kirkland Lake**, Ont., church featuring Walter Kelly and his daughter Tracy who have served in Nicaragua. • The **Lakeside** congregation, Calgary, Alb., held a kitchen shower for itself on May 9. The congregation is requesting books for its library. • On May 6, the Dundonald Junior and Senior Handbell Choir provided music in the morning services of the **Massey Place** church, Saskatoon, Sask. Herb Anderson from Edmonton was missions speaker on June 3. • In May, the **North East** church, Calgary, began study of Audie Gaddis' *How to Grow a Happy Family*. A church picnic was June 3 at Pearce Estates Park.

Clare Leedom visited the **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation on May 27. Velvet Wideman gave a short presentation about Camp Kahquah on May 20. • Lynda Kelly from Welland spoke to the women of the **Port Colborne**, Ont., church during the Sunday school hour on May 13. • On May 27, Alan Craig from Living Rock Ministries spoke to the **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont. • The music of the Gerzinus Hoekstra family was featured in the May 13 evening service of the **Sherkston**, Ont., congregation. Roy Sider was speaker on May 20. • The youth of the **Springvale** congregation, Hagersville, Ont., held a May 26 yard sale to raise funds for Youth Quest '90. Bob Leadley, Canadian Director of Stewardship, preached on May 27.

On May 6, Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Giles reported to the **Stayner**, Ont., congregation on their MCC exchange trip to Russia for mental health professionals. Claire Weston, a local optician, spoke at a Super Sensational Salad Supper on May 10. • The Prime-Timers group of the **Wainfleet**, Ont., church had their annual picnic in the bush and bike hike on May 6. The 150-voice Festival Singers performed "Exaltation" on May 20. • The **Welland**,



Five Brethren in Christ graduated from Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary on May 18. Pictured (left to right) are Bijoy Roul (India), Ed Ashby (Ashland), Jose Otamendi (Venezuela), Peter von Keyserling (Charlottesville, Va.), and Steve Manyane (South Africa). Standing behind the graduates are three Brethren in Christ members of the faculty: Dr. Fred Holland, Dr. Arthur Climenhaga, and Dr. Luke Keefer.



Shedding light on darkness

**A Mennonite and Brethren in Christ response
to violence and sexual abuse in the family**

a conference for laypeople, caregivers,
pastors and professionals

November 2-3, 1990
Upland Brethren in Christ Church
Upland, California

Cost: \$45.00 (includes registration and two meals)
Transportation and lodging must be arranged privately.
Lodging is available in area homes on a limited basis.

Purpose: to share personal stories, to acknowledge responsibility for the problem, to empower each other to minister to abused people in our communities

Keynote speaker: Ruth Krall, Director of Peace Studies and Associate Professor of Psychology and Religion at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

Workshop titles include:

- Anabaptist theology and abuse
- Recognizing signs of abuse
- Religious beliefs and abuse of women and children
- Common characteristics of sexually abusive males
- Working with perpetrators of wife abuse
- Working with adult survivors of sexual abuse
- Childhood trauma and its impact on faith development
- Substance abuse and violence
- Legal aspects of sexual abuse
- Support groups for adult survivors of sexual abuse
- Rules and boundaries of the pastoral relationship

Sponsored by:
MCC Domestic Violence Task Force
MCC Committee on Women's Concerns
West Coast MCC

Endorsed by:
Board for Brotherhood Concerns
Brethren in Christ Church

For more information, write to West Coast MCC, 1010 G Street, Reedley, CA 93654, phone (209) 638-6911; or the MCC Domestic Violence Task Force, P.O. Box 1292, Winkler, MB R6W 4B3, phone (204) 325-7514. Or you can contact the office of the Board for Brotherhood Concerns, P.O. Box 246, Mount Joy, PA 17552, phone (717) 653-8251. **Registration deadline is October 1, 1990.**

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. The Spirit has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

Ont., church sponsored a May 12 Pro Life meeting and dinner with music by Pat Hannigan, and speaker Bev Hadland, director of a pregnancy counseling center in Toronto. • Phil Long of the **Montgomery** (Pa.) quiz team won the Jason Rosado Memorial Award at the recent Can-Am Tournament.

Central Conference

The May 19-20 anniversary celebration of the **Amherst** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, included a gospel concert by Becky Swartz, messages by Merle Brubaker, fellowship, and guest musician Gary Herndon. • The May 10 mother-daughter banquet of the **Ashland**, Ohio, church was on an African theme, with Marilyn Ebersole speaking. • On May 20, the **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, had an "I Believe in Missions" program with Deb Patrick, home from Bogota, Colombia. • The **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind., has a new furnace. • Ruth Pawelski spoke on her experiences in Cuba and Mexico at a May 5 women's fellowship meeting of the **Fairview** church, Englewood, Ohio. • Pioneer Clubs children of the **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Ohio, rode in the town Memorial Day parade to promote VBS, called "Happy Trails."

On the evening of May 20, the **Lakeview** church, Goodrich, Mich., enjoyed a singspiration and refreshments in the park. • A rummage sale was planned by the **Morrison**, Ill., church to help support their June 18-22 Bible school. Four members were received recently. • Members Sergio Pereira and Bill Stieglitz delivered sermons in May to the **Nappanee**, Ind., congregation while the pastoral family vacationed. • The Newton junior and senior high choirs sang on May 27 for the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation. The youth had a cookout and games in the afternoon. • The building committee of the **Sippo Valley** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, met with Merle Brubaker on May 7. VBS was planned for June 11-15. • The **Union Grove** congregation, New Paris, Ind., planned a father-son banquet for June 16.

Midwest Conference

The **Abilene**, Ks., church hosted the area missions rally on the evening of Apr. 29, with Sheron Brunner, Danisa Ndlovu, Fannie Longenecker, and Louis Cober. • On May 19, the **Mound Park** congregation, Dallas Center, Iowa, had a family retreat at Willowbrook Camp in Des Moines. • The **Mountain View** church ladies, Colorado Springs, Colo., enjoyed a retreat in the mountains at Breckenridge on May 5-6. Mary Fisher led studies in spiritual growth. • The Hoffmans gave a concert June 10 for the **Oklahoma City**, Okla., congregation. A farewell and picnic for them was June 17. • On June 4-8, the **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Ks., cooperated with other area churches in a VBS. A farewell for Jesse and Wilma Dourte was held on June 10. • May 23 was the "pastor's pizza 'preciation party" for Wednesday Night L-I-V-E workers at the **Zion** church, Abilene, Ks. June 1-3 was family camp at Living Water Ranch.

Pacific Conference

Bishop Wenger spoke in the Mother's Day service of the **Ontario**, Calif., church. The third annual Pinewood Derby competition and hot dog feast was hosted on May 20. • A surprise "pound-

Evangelical Visitor

ing" of gifts, food, and staples was given May 6 following the evening service to the new pastoral couple of the **Pacific Highway** church, Salem, Ore., Denny and Linda Sanders. He was installed Apr. 29.

For the Record

Births

Albright: Dane Anthony, Apr. 22; John and Deborah (Enders) Albright, Manor congregation, Pa.

Beam: Jessica Susanne, May 14; Todd and Susanna (Bert) Beam, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Bechtel: Casey Brooke, Apr. 29; Scott and Monda (Leight) Bechtel, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Fallenstein: Mildred Lenore, Mar. 16; Bill and Charlotte (Weimer) Fallenstein, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Fidler: Victoria Lynn, Apr. 26; Greg and Colleen (Fretz) Fidler, Houghton congregation, Ont.

Garis: Kaleb Foster, Mar. 18; Merle and Karen (Linsenbiger) Garis, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Gerhart: Cassandra Marie, May 12; Kent and Cindy (Fry) Gerhart, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Gladfelter: Charles Anthony Henry, Jr., May 9; Dora Gladfelter, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Griffis: Katelyn, Apr. 24; Les and Suzanne Griffis, Sherkston congregation, Ont.

Heisey: Jared David, Apr. 8; chosen son of Richard and Nancy (Stoner) Heisey, Winchester congregation, Va.

James: Denzel, Mar. 30; Daniel and Suzanne (Clarke) James, Falls View congregation, Ont.

Johnson: Tyson Darryl, Feb. 7; Steve and Stacey (Bowlin) Johnson, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Junkins: Keri Leigh, May 22; Robert and Christine (Bailey) Junkins, Fairview congregation, Pa.

LaSala: Danielle Ruth, May 12; Bruce and Lorie (Nagle) LaSala, Manor congregation, Pa.

Latham: Lisa Lee, Apr. 27; Bill and Autumn (Nicklis) Latham, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Mellinger: Whitney Nicole, May 10; Eugene and Judy (Wingert) Mellinger, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

Moore: Michael Kenneth, Apr. 2; Rodger and Lori Ann (Pychel) Moore, Falls View congregation, Ont.

Moyer: Caitlyn Sara, Feb. 28; Frank and Andrea (Weising) Moyer, New Covenant congregation, Pa.

Newswanger: Jason Kyle, Apr. 21; Duane and Bonnie (Tweed) Newswanger, Manor congregation, Pa.

Pigeon: Daniel Wayne, Apr. 24; Brian and Pat Pigeon, Lakeside congregation, Alb.

Rae: Matthew Alexander, May 18; Mervyn

and Mary (Winger) Rae, Fordwich congregation, Ont.

Reid: Matthew James, May 20; Reynold and Linda Reid, North East Community congregation, Alb.

Sherk: Jacob Stephen, Mar. 30; Steve and Lisa (Sider) Sherk, Port Colborne congregation, Ont.

Spellman: Zachary Tyler, Apr. 16; Mike and Peggy Spellman, Cumberland Valley congregation, Pa.

Tyson: Nathan Benjamin, May 20; Kent and Darlene (Groff) Tyson, New Covenant congregation, Pa.

Weber: Daniel Joseph, Apr. 4; Paul and Kathy Weber, Rosebank congregation, Ont.

Weddings

Allison-Reed: Pamela Lynn, daughter of Joseph and Carolyn Reed, Westminster, Calif., and Steven Dale, son of Dale and Pauline Allison, Mifflintown, Pa., Apr. 21, at the Long Beach Christian Church, Long Beach, Calif., with Rev. W. Dale Allison officiating.

Bonilla-Sanchez: Erika Sanchez and Alfredo Bonilla, May 26, at the Pacific Highway Community Church with Rev. Elias Rodriguez, Rev. Benjamin Rodriguez, and Rev. Victor Vargis officiating.

Fretz-Jacques: Lisa Dawn Jacques, Port Colborne, Ont., and Michael Joseph, son of Howard and Jean Fretz, Ridgeway, Ont., May 19, at the Falls View Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ross Nigh and Rev. Dwayne Hulett officiating.

Garis-Schmidt: Kellie A., daughter of Jerry and Belinda Schmidt, Telford, Pa., and Patrick W., son of Mary Swartley, Quakertown, Pa., and Glenn Garis, Telford, May 12, at the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Robert Kratz and Rev. Kevin Ryan officiating.

Herr-Snavely: Kathleen Anne Snavely, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Q. Brown, Lancaster, Pa., and John R., son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl M. Herr, Lancaster, Pa., May 26, at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John B. Hawbaker officiating.

Janzen-Major: Karen, daughter of Ervin and Hilda Major, Niagara Falls, Ont., and Daniel Janzen, Port Rowan, Ont., Apr. 28, at the Falls View Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Dwayne Hulett officiating.

Johnston-Crest: Grace A. Crest, daughter of John and Martha Sillinger, Lock Haven, Pa., and George J., Jr., son of George and Hannah Johnston, Lock Haven, Apr. 20, at the Cedar Heights Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John L. Bundy officiating.

Kinderwater-Swope: Valerie Jean, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Swope, Gettysburg, Pa., and Kurt Michael, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Kinderwater, Lancaster, Pa., May 18, at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating.

Markowski-Kanode: Frieda L., daughter of Avery and Beulah Kanode, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Stanley, son of Simon and Adeline Markowski, Frackville, Pa., May 5, at the Hershey Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. J. Earl Musser officiating.

Nealy-McKee: Tammy Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence D. McKee, Jr., Carlisle, Pa.,

and Todd Tyler, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Nealy, Newville, Pa., Mar. 24, at the Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kenneth O. Hoke officiating.

Oldham-Plummer: Kelli Sue Plummer, daughter of Kathleen Price, New Paris, Pa., and Mick McDaniel, Bedford, Pa., and Stephen Nathan, son of Ralph and Carol Oldham, Schellsburg, Pa., May 5, at the Springhope Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Samuel Oldham officiating.

Painter-Clippinger: Janet Fay, daughter of Wayne and Thelma Clippinger, Chambersburg, Pa., and Gerald David, son of John and Margaret Painter, St. Thomas, Pa., Apr. 28, at the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kevin Witter officiating.

Shoop-Miller: Jeannine LeAnn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Miller, Greencastle, Pa., and Rick Alton, son of Herbert Shoop and Sandi Snyder, Apr. 28, at the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner and Rev. Randy J. Martin officiating.

Squibbs-Johnson: Diane Lynne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Johnson, Conestoga, Pa., and Robert McCoy III, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Squibbs II, May 19, at the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Omer E. King officiating.

Waters-Crumley: Roberta L., daughter of Lester and Mary Crumley, Mount Joy, Pa., and Gary L., son of Emory and Pauline Waters, Mount Joy, May 5, at the Mt. Pleasant Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Jerel Book officiating.

Wenger-Johnson: Suzanne Marie, daughter of Johnnie and Sheila Johnson, Middleburg, Fla., and Clarke Dean, son of Virgil and Carol Wenger, Abilene, Ks., Mar. 2, in Middleburg, Fla.

Wingard-Engle: Lisa, daughter of Leon and Dorcas Engle, West Milton, Ohio, and Greg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Wingard, Ontario, Calif., Apr. 7, at the Highland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Andrew Slagenweit and Rev. Louis Cober officiating.

Obituaries

Bert: Myra Mae Bert, born Mar. 6, 1903, daughter of James A. and Zora Kready Kuntz, died Apr. 21. Surviving are her husband, Newell E. Bert; two sons, Wayne and Harold; two daughters, Dorothy Teishgraeber and Ruth Bert; six grandchildren; five brothers, Nathan, Harry, Roy, Homer, and Earl; and a sister, Edna Stagleder. She was a longtime attender of the Zion congregation, Abilene, Ks., where the funeral service was held with Rev. Ron Howell and Rev. Charles Norman officiating. Interment was in Union Cemetery.

Brown: Sharon Beth Brown, born Mar. 3, 1978, daughter of Frank and Eileen Brown, died Apr. 30. Surviving are her parents; and two sisters, Kimberly and Michelle Seelaus. Sharon attended the Souderton, Pa., Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. Kevin Ryan officiating. Interment was in the Jerusalem U.C.C. Cemetery, Almont, Pa.

Byers: Monroe Milton Byers, born Oct. 10, 1911, son of Alfred and Hannah (Burkhart) Byers, died Dec. 19, 1989. Surviving are his wife, Mary (Wingert); two daughters, Fannie Slick, and Joan Rutt; a son, Ethelbert; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. He was a member of the Chambersburg, Pa., congregation where the fu-

by Donald R. Zook

A miracle story appears in all four Gospels. It is a story of Jesus providing food for 5,000 hungry families. It is a story that reveals truths about God, about Jesus, and about the disciples. Some insights in the story are helpful for God's people in many different parts of the world.

The story of this miracle begins with a problem: there were 5,000 hungry families. Having served in Africa for 15 years and in the United States the rest of my life, I don't really know what it's like to be hungry—not the way these people were hungry. But I think I can understand as a father and grandfather how I might feel if just one of my children or one of my grandchildren was very hungry. That would motivate me to do something very quickly. Jesus was that kind of person—he had compassion on the multitude and he knew they needed help.

Somebody has said that every time you find a miracle in the Bible, first of all you find a problem. Miracle stories began first with God's people having a problem which is too big for them. Then God uses those tough circumstances to bring his people to the point where they are ready for a miracle.

When we realize that, we take a different attitude toward our problems. Problems are situations either engineered or permitted by our Lord in order to do something special for his people. Are you facing a problem today? If so, perhaps the Lord is preparing you for a miracle.

In John 6 it says that Jesus knew what he was going to do. But he used this problem in order to develop the people who were working and learning with him. And so Jesus went to Philip and said, "Philip, how can we solve this problem?"

Philip, I think, was my kind of person. Philip looked at the problem and described what could be done and how much money was required. Then he

said, "Lord, eight months' wages is hardly enough to give everybody a little bit." Eight months' wages in the United States for an average wage earner might be approximately \$15,000. Divide that among 5,000 hungry families and the result is approximately \$3.00 per family.

I'm a McDonald's man. When I travel alone, I go to McDonald's most of the time when it's mealtime. I have an idea what \$3.00 will buy at McDonald's. I think you get real value there. It might be a cheeseburger, large fries, and medium-sized Diet Coke. That isn't very much to feed a hungry family.

That was Philip's answer to the problem. They didn't have eight months' wages and it wasn't enough anyway.

Andrew was a "people" person. Andrew went among the crowd and he found a boy who had brought a lunch—five barley buns and two small fish. Andrew went to the boy and asked him to give his lunch to Jesus.

Have you ever thought about the choices which the boy had when Andrew came to him? The boy could have said, "My mother made this lunch for me. She knows that I am going to be hungry today. I think I had better make my mother happy and eat this lunch myself." That would have been one possibility. Or the boy could have said, "I'm hungry and here's a bunch of other hungry people. I'll eat what I need and share what is left." Or he could have said, "I'm hungry and there are a bunch of other hungry people here; let's divide it up and see how far it will go." But the boy didn't make any of those choices. He was willing to give that lunch—everything he had—to Jesus. When Jesus saw that, we find that Jesus bowed and he gave thanks to God. The result was a miracle. Jesus broke the bread and gave it to the disciples. The disciples gave it to the multitude. The people had all that they wanted and there was some left over.

You might wonder how Andrew found the boy with the five loaves and two small fishes. I have a premise that it wasn't very hard at all. When I was working at Macha Mission in Zambia, at one time there were people who

Little becomes much . . .

Wouldn't it have been wonderful to be living here when Jesus was here on earth? To see him do a miracle like this would go on their bicycles down to Lake Kariba and they would fish. It took them about a day to bring those fish back on their bicycles to Macha Mission. You always knew when there was a fish salesman in the area. There was no refrigeration. One way of describing the situation is to say the fish "smelled to high heaven." I think that Andrew had no difficulty in finding that boy with the five buns and two small fishes.

The Bible doesn't go into further detail, but someone who studied Jesus very carefully said that he probably did something special with those leftovers. He probably called his disciples and then called the little boy to the front, saying, "Lad, this is what is remaining of your lunch. Take it back to your family so that they can have some as well."

An artist has drawn a picture of a mother looking out the window of her home. The sun is setting and she sees her son coming back, followed by twelve men with baskets. She runs out to meet him and says, "Son, how did things go today? What did Jesus say? How was your lunch? Did everything go all right?" And then she asks, "What are these men doing here?" The boy explains to his mother how Jesus wanted his lunch. He turned that lunch over to Jesus and it multiplied and fed all those hungry people and these are the leftovers.

There is something special in that story as far as I'm concerned. The bread was barley. Barley was a food that was conspicuously for the people who were very poor. That poor family ended up with twelve baskets full of bread which he brought home to a needy family.

More important, though, than what happened to the boy and his family is what we find in verse 14 of John 6. Those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth; this is that Prophet that should come into the world." Jesus was magnified. They knew that here there was something special about the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Donald R. Zook is the Executive Director of the Jacob Engle Foundation

when God is in it

in feeding the 5,000? To see him heal all those people who were sick? To see him raise Lazarus from the dead and to hear his marvelous teaching? Those people had a real privilege of seeing Jesus in action when he was here. But when Jesus was ready to go back to his Father in heaven, he made a very startling statement to his disciples. We find this in John, chapter 14, verses 12-14. Jesus, as he was talking to his disciples about the time he was going to leave them, made this statement: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."

How could we possibly do works that were greater than what Jesus did when he was here on earth? D. L. Moody, the evangelist, had a theory about that. He said that he thought the works which he thought Jesus was talking about were what would happen after Jesus went back to heaven and the Holy Spirit would come down. Then the disciples would see the privilege of having lives changed, of seeing people become new creatures in Christ Jesus—doing a miracle which Jesus wasn't able to accomplish while he was here, but which happened after he went back to heaven and the Holy Spirit came down.

Do you have a problem today? Perhaps Jesus has been preparing you for a miracle. The miracle could be multiplying scarce resources and doing "abundantly above all that we ask or think." Or it could be as it happened in the life of the Apostle Paul, where for a special reason God allowed the problem to remain along with the assurance that "my grace is sufficient for thee." Either way, we know that our God continues to be a God of miracles so that Jesus can be magnified.

Do you have scarce resources? Are they inadequate to accomplish everything that you feel should be done? Our God is a God of miracles. Our God is a God of delightful surprises. He is longing to have us let go of those things which we hold so tightly. He can take our little and turn it into much—so that people will acknowledge that he is Lord.

neral was held with Rev. A. Graybill Brubaker and Rev. Kevin Witter officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Conover: William B. Conover, born Aug. 3, 1921, son of Lester and Anna Carver Conover, died Apr. 20. Surviving are his wife, Margaret (Sands); a daughter, Gail Morris; and two sons, Kim W., and David L. William had been employed for 31 years as a Sears general manager, had served in World War II, and was a member of the Rotary and Elks Clubs, and the Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. John W. Schock and Rev. Roger Witter officiating.

Detwiler: Christian Robert Detwiler, born Aug. 26, 1987, died May 15. Surviving are his parents, Robert R. and Debra S. Detwiler; a brother, Benjamin Ray; grandparents, Elmer and Olivia Detwiler, and Herbert and Sara Hess; and a great-grandmother, Helen S. Hess. He attended the Pequea congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Omer E. King officiating. Interment was in the Pequea church cemetery.

Frank: James W. Frank, born June 27, 1918, died May 9. Surviving are his wife, Ruth E. Frank; two daughters, Beatrice Ketner and Irene H. Frank; four brothers, George, Robert, Harry, and Glen Moyer; three sisters, Ruth Ludwig, Mary DuVall, and Sally Gerber; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. James was a member of the Mechanicsburg, Pa., congregation where the funeral service was held with Rev. Ken Hepner and Rev. Simon Lehman officiating. Interment was in Chestnut Hill Cemetery.

Long: Walter H. Long, born Dec. 16, 1939, son of Robert H. and Dorothy E. Surratt Long, died May 3. He was preceded in death by a sister, Dorothy. He is survived by his wife, Evalyn (Schock); two daughters, Roberta Ann and Julia Marie; three brothers, Robert W., Howard W., and James M. He was the founder and executive director of the Teen Challenge for New Life in Wheeling, W.V., and a former missionary to Zambia. Two services were held for him, one in Wheeling and one in the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Jay E. Sisco officiating. Interment was in the Schock family cemetery, Washington Boro, Pa.

Nyman: Ward T. Nyman, born Feb. 14, 1925, son of Joseph and Rena Nyman, died Apr. 10. Preceding him in death were his parents; a brother, Glenn; and a sister, Thorus Rogers. Surviving are his wife, Celestine (Litz); three daughters, Donna Corl, Linda Watkins, and Sandra Miller; three sisters, Fay Holt, Melba Strouse, and Shirley Bitner; and three brothers, J. Earl, Lloyd, and Joseph. Ward was a retired farmer and had worked at Piper Aircraft. He was a member of the Marsh Creek Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were held at the W. Robert Neff Funeral Home, Howard, Pa., with Rev. Ralph Hock and Rev. Larry Strouse officiating. Interment was in Schencks Cemetery.

Pace: Lewis Pace, Sr., born Apr. 28, 1911, died May 12. Surviving are his wife, Ethel M. (Wingard); 3 sons, Lewis, Ronald F., and David E.; 2 daughters, Geneva M. Wade, and Sandra J. Stoak; 17 grandchildren; and 32 great-grandchildren. Lewis was former owner of Pace Landscaping Co., and a member of the West Shore congregation. The funeral was held at the Neill Funeral Home, Camp Hill, Pa., with Rev. Simon A. Lehman, Jr., Rev. James Sollenberger, and Rev. Ricky Pace officiating. Interment was in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, New Cumberland, Pa.

Smith: Cora Bell Messersmith Smith, born Nov. 14, 1909, in Bedford Co., Pa., died Apr. 7. Surviving are 9 daughters, Ruth Johns, Thelma Garland, Marjory Ritter, Melva Peters, Ethel Gilbert, Joyce Clark, Bertha McCall, Jean Shaffer, and Phyllis Snoko; 3 sons, Ralph, Ronald, and Robert; 2 brothers, Glenn and Conda; 2 sisters, Dorothy Kriner and Hilda Weaverling; 29 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; 2 great-great-grandchildren; and 8 stepgrandchildren. Cora was a member of the Chambersburg congregation and sewed many garments for overseas missions. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. Doug Kelchner and Rev. Kevin Witter officiating. Interment was in Park Lawn Memorial Gardens.

Urey: Bruce E. Urey, born Feb. 1, 1935, in York, Pa., died Apr. 21. Surviving are his wife, Betty L. (Rife); and three sons, Jeffrey E., Gregory N., and Kurt A. He received his bachelor of religious education degree from Messiah College in 1961; his master of divinity degree in biblical studies from Evangelical School of Theology, Myers-town, in 1984, and a master of theology degree in New Testament from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1985. He was a member of the Carlisle, Pa., Presbytery, had served as supply pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Millerstown, and had preached missions for various denominations from 1984-88. He had served in pastorates of Brethren in Christ and United Brethren churches. Funeral services were held at the Camp Hill Presbyterian Church with Rev. William J. Murphy and Rev. James G. Tice officiating. Interment was in Air Hill Cemetery.

Tribute

When a faithful servant/minister of the Lord is called home, it makes us conscious again of the brevity of life. This truth is accentuated when the call, to us, seems premature. Rev. Bruce Urey was only 55 years of age, but his adult years were filled with ministry for the Lord whom he loved dearly.

Rev. Urey served pastorates for the Brethren in Christ Church from 1961 to 1973. These included Farris Mines, Va., and Martinsburg and Mt. Rock in Pennsylvania. Then followed pastorates with the United Brethren Church for 11 years until 1984. For the past six years, Bro. Urey has answered calls to preach in evangelistic services. His ministry has extended beyond the Brethren in Christ and United Brethren to include the Evangelical Congregational, United Methodist, and Wesleyan churches. More than 45 such services are in his records. He has also been active in evangelical fellowships, commissions on evangelism, and seminars wherever he has served.

Since leaving a full-time pastorate, the Ureys have attended the Carlisle congregation. There Bro. Urey taught Sunday school classes where his teaching gifts have been highly praised. He was a growing servant, constantly studying to improve his ministry skills. A former bishop once described his worship service as "beautifully formal and bountifully free."

Rev. Urey believed and practiced that real and total ministry must be more than clerical, that it must include equipping the laity to use and deploy their gifts and skills to serve the Lord, the church, and the world. He leaves to us a legacy of faithfulness, diligence, and excellence in the calling of a minister.

Our hearts are heavy as we share the sorrow of Betty, their three sons and other family members and friends. The loss is keen, but so is the grace and mercy of the Lord our living Savior and coming King.

H. Frank Kipe
for the Board of Bishops

Messiah College News

Brethren in Christ students earn spring Dean's List

Spring Dean's List honor went to 271 students this year. To be eligible, full-time status and a grade point average of at least 3.6 on a 4.0 scale is required. Here are the Brethren in Christ students who made the list (college class as of the spring semester):

Robert T. Bare (senior, health and physical education) Lebanon, Pa.
 Gregg L. Bowman (junior, biology and education) Lititz, Pa.
 Darren K. Davis (sophomore, engineering) Dillsburg, Pa.
 Susan L. Fullerton (sophomore, international business) Elizabethtown, Pa.
 Rodney L. Gayman (sophomore, mathematics) Pleasant Hall, Pa.

Carolyn R. Groff (freshman, accounting) Gordonville, Pa.
 Renee C. Guistwite (freshman, chemistry) Carlisle, Pa.
 Elizabeth M. Imboden (senior, biology) Mechancisburg, Pa.
 Todd S. McKee (senior, Bible) Zullinger, Pa.
 Jeffrey S. Miller (freshman, political science) Grantham, Pa.
 Karen L. Pertusio (freshman, elementary education) Annville, Pa.
 Christopher E. Rickman (junior, pre-medicine) Chambersburg, Pa.
 Kevin S. Robinson (freshman, mathematics) Hollidaysburg, Pa.
 Eric A. Seibert (sophomore, Bible) East Berlin, Pa.
 Beth Ann Shertzner (freshman, accounting) Columbia, Pa.
 Curtis R. Sisco (sophomore, theater) Hummelstown, Pa.
 Merris Stambaugh (junior, biology) Winchester, Va.
 Tonya L. Starnner (sophomore, family studies) Millerstown, Pa.
 Eric L. Steffy (freshman, engineering) East Petersburg, Pa.

Mark W. Wastler (sophomore, history) Grantham, Pa.
 (Not included on this list are students at the Philadelphia campus, whose academic year ended later than the Grantham campus.)

Groundbreaking marks start of new academic building

As preparations were completed for Messiah College's eightieth commencement, members of the Messiah community and friends of the college gathered May 11 to break ground for the new academic building. The Board of Trustees named Mid-State, Inc., of Harrisburg, Pa., as general contractor of the 65,000 square foot building. To be constructed at a cost of approximately \$6.7 million, the building was the single largest goal in the recently completed Shaping the Future campaign.

Galen Oakes (chairman of the Board of Trustees), Charles Frey, Emerson Frey (trustee), and Academic Dean Harold Heie each turned a spade of dirt to mark the occasion. In keeping with college tradition, they used the same silver ceremonial shovel that has broken ground for most campus buildings since the college's early years.

President Hostetter announced to the Board of Trustees at their May 11 meeting that the public phase of the campaign was complete. As of May 1, gifts and pledges to Shaping the Future stood at \$20.4 million, surpassing the original goal by some \$4 million.

Saying thank you

Among the numerous events on Messiah's commencement weekend in early May was the annual Appreciation Dinner. Administration, faculty, staff, and board members gathered for the event, which honors those members of the college community who have contributed to the college in a special way.

Of the three people honored for 20 years of service, two are Brethren in Christ: faculty member Gerald D. Hess, and staff member Carol Hostetter. Both attend the Grantham congregation.

During the Appreciation Dinner, the college also awarded faculty development grants and scholarships. One professor receiving such an award, Terry L. Brensinger (Biblical Studies), is Brethren in Christ and attends the Harrisburg congregation. He will be writing the volume on the book of Judges for the *Believers Church Bible Commentary*. Published by Herald Press, this com-



Scholarship for the Young Church Musician

Sponsored by the Board for Congregational Life through its Music Trust Fund

These scholarships of \$200.00 are to be used for private music lessons.

Eligibility

1. Applicant must be a member or regular attender of a Brethren in Christ congregation.
2. Applicant's age must be 13 to 19 as of September 1, 1990.
3. Applicant must be presently studying music, and must be participating in some way in the music program of the local congregation.
4. Applicant must exhibit potential for assuming responsibilities in the area of church music.
5. Recommendation by the pastor or a church musician must accompany the application.

Application deadline: August 31, 1990. Plans are for the recipients to be notified by September 30. For a scholarship application, contact:

Board for Congregational Life
 P.O. Box 163
 Mount Joy, PA 17552
 (717) 653-9321

mentary series covers both the Old and New Testaments and is intended to reflect the various distinctives of the Anabaptist tradition.

Summer music ministry

The Messiah College summer music ministry team, New Light, consisting of six members of three states and one foreign country, will travel for twelve weeks during the months of June, July, and August. They will present concerts in eight states and the province of Ontario. Selected by a committee on the basis of musical ability and Christian witness, the team will present a variety of music including spirituals, hymns, and contemporary Christian songs.

Two members of the team are Brethren in Christ: junior computer science major Brad Miller, of the Grantham (Pa.) congregation, and senior behavioral science major Melissa Martin, from the Dillsburg (Pa.) congregation.

The following Brethren in Christ congregations are on New Light's itinerary:

Martinsburg (Pa.), June 23-24; *Hunlock Creek* (Pa.), June 29; *Nappanee* (Ind.), July 12; *Mooretown* (Mich.), July 13; *Ashland* (Ohio), July 14-15; *Amherst* (Ohio), July 22; *Lakeview Community* (Goodrich, Mich.), Aug. 1; *Westheights* (Kitchener, Ont.), Aug. 10; *Sherkston* (Ont.), Aug. 11-12; and *Crossroads* (Mt. Joy, Pa.), Aug. 19.

Summer missions

Messiah College awarded four \$2,000 grants to students this year, enabling them to share in a summer mission project rather than working to help meet school costs. Recipients of the grants must work within an established missions agency, keep a daily journal of their activities, submit a written summary report of their experience, and share their experience in a public form at the college.

This year's recipients are: Wachipi Graham, a junior art major from Lothian, M.D., working with Servants in Missions Abroad (Western Indian Ministries) in Arizona; Julie Jansson, a junior music education major from Webster, N.Y., working with Child Evangelism Fellowship in Central Pennsylvania; Lori Peters, a junior human resource management major from Basking Ridge, N.J., with Teen Missions International in Hong Kong; and Anjanette Shank, a sophomore English major from Broadway, Va., working with New Tribes Missions in Papua New Guinea. ■

The Way of Peace

Book review

Curry, Dean C.: *A World Without Tyranny: Christian Faith and International Politics*. Crossway Books, 1990. Reviewed by Samuel M. Brubaker.

In this publication, the author sets out "to analyze systematically the connection between Christianity as a biblically-based theological system and the world of international politics." This book is well written, in the readable style which characterizes Dr. Curry's works. It reviews the international situation of the late 1980s with an informative chapter. There follows a review of the way in which God-denying worldviews culminate in tyranny. Democracy in the United States is applauded (rightly) as a political expression, new in its time, of a vision of humankind in the image of God, endowed with dignity and rights. Curry nicely develops the idea that such a view, when espoused by societal leaders, leads to freedom, which in turn allows this worldview to flourish, thus retarding tyranny.

The concluding section of the book is a call for the United States to remain vigilant in protection of freedom, to continue the policies of the Reagan era, and to maintain military defenses strong enough to assure the deterrence of would-be tyrants, who, the author reminds us, remain poised to obliterate freedom wherever they have a chance.

Along with its strengths, the book exhibits several flaws. One of these is that it obviously represents a view of the world from a conservative United States viewpoint. This is especially evident in the section dealing with the Third World. The views of Third World leaders are indicted as Marxist-dominated and failed. While containing some truth, this section is condescending toward the Third World.

Another weakness is the height to which the United States is raised as the protector against tyranny. Curry admits U.S. lack of perfection. But while he cites the sins of tyrants in other nations, he leaves unmentioned the tyranny practiced by the United States against Native Americans; against Africans;

against Palestinians via the U.S. supported Zionists (now the U.S. client nation Israel); against Nicaraguan peasants burying their Contra-killed dead; against Salvadoran Christians persecuted by their U.S. supported government. In exposing tyranny, Curry uses a spotlight, not a floodlight.

A third weakness flows from the effort to discredit Evangelical proponents of other views. Although the author declares at the outset that the book will not present prescribed "biblical" answers to specific international political issues, the recurrent justification of the U.S. foreign policy of the 1980s and refutation of the insights of Anabaptist scholars leave the impression that the author accomplishes what he claims he will not do.

A fourth weakness is perhaps the greatest. The author purports to be taking a biblical view of his subject, yet is obviously heavily influenced by American patriotic and nationalistic thinking. This at the same time he declares Evangelical Anabaptists' views to be Marxist-influenced and non-biblical. The author's own claim to Biblicism is seriously weakened, however, by his handling of a quotation of Jesus Christ. The first paragraphs of the book present Jesus' famous statement to Pilate, declaring that his servants would not fight to defend his freedom because "My kingdom is not of this world." In this book, Curry concludes that Christians must support preparations for fighting, and even fighting itself, because Jesus' kingdom is not of this world! Curry is biblical in diagnosing and describing the root cause of tyranny—it arises from the sinfulness of humanity; we wrestle against spiritual forces. But after accepting the Divine diagnosis, he chooses as the final resort in the struggle against tyranny the age-old human "solution" namely, the weapons of carnal warfare.

Sam Brubaker, a member of the Fairview (OH) Brethren in Christ Church, represents the Brethren in Christ on the Social Action Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals. The "Way of Peace" column is a project of the Board for Brotherhood Concerns.

Focus on the Bible

*Eleventh in a series written by
faculty members of Messiah College*

Apocalyptic literature

by John R. Yeatts

Terrible last days, cosmic upheaval, destroyed human relationships, judgment, ingathering of the Jews, New Jerusalem, resurrection of the dead, angels and demons, messianic kingdom, fertility, end of war. These elements are all part of a particular style of ancient literature that arose in later Old and New Testament times. This literature is called apocalyptic. Although there were about 30 Jewish or Christian apocalypses, the Book of Revelation and Daniel 7-12 are the clearest examples found in the Christian Scriptures.

The word *apocalyptic* is a translation of the biblical word which means "uncovering," "unveiling," or "revealing." It describes a type of biblical literature, but the word is rarely used in Christian circles. Apocalyptic is usually lumped together with prophecy, but there are significant differences.

First, apocalyptic focuses on two ages. The prophets advocated economic, political, and social reform in this world. As time progressed, it seemed that the "present age" was evil beyond reform. Therefore, the apocalypticist posited an "age to come" when righteousness would reign due to the intervention of God himself. So, apocalyptic includes a doctrine of two ages, the present age and the age to come.

Second, apocalyptic is based on ecstatic visions. The prophets communicated the direct words of God. Their message was clear and unquestionable. The words of the prophets were communicated on the street corners. The apocalypticists, by way of contrast, communicated the hid-

den mysteries of God through strange visions. The message is mysterious and often ambiguous. The words of the apocalypticist were to be read, not spoken. Indeed, if the Book of Revelation were read from the street corner, the sanity of the reader would likely be questioned.

Third, apocalyptic communicates through symbols. The prophets spoke in words. Their language is much like what would be found in the editorial columns of modern newspapers. The apocalypticists communicated in word pictures. Their message is more like what is found in the newspaper's political cartoons. These cartoons communicate as effectively as the editorials but at a different level. Apocalyptic communicates in symbolic word pictures.

Given these differences, how does one interpret this other-worldly, visionary, and symbolic apocalyptic literature? It is relatively easy to interpret prophecy; the words of Jeremiah and Amos are clear. But how does one interpret the Revelation and the second half of Daniel? Here are some suggestions.

First, keep in mind that apocalyptic speaks in symbols. These symbols are used to explain the unexplainable—God and the spiritual world. Many people say they do not understand the Book of Revelation. Nevertheless, the author says repeatedly: "He who has an ear, let him hear." We must assume that the symbolic language of apocalyptic is understandable. The best analogy may indeed be the political cartoon. We know instinctively the meaning of the symbols in modern political cartoons. The elephant symbolizes the Republican party, and the donkey the Democratic party. The eagle symbolizes the United States, and the hammer and sickle the Soviet Union. It is likely that the people in the first century Roman empire would have similarly understood the meaning of the symbols in the Book of Revelation. Because we are nearly 1900 years removed from the situation, we are less likely to understand them. Therefore, historical research into the time period helps us to understand what is meant by the symbols. To understand apocalyptic, we must continually remember the symbolic nature of the literature.

Second, use the imagination as well as

the intellect to determine the meaning of the symbols. Apocalyptic is crammed full of pictures and poetic images. If the Book of Revelation is an inspired picture book, it is much better understood with the tools of the artist than those of the scientist. We make a fundamental mistake when we approach apocalyptic literature with the algebraic mentality: find X. The Book of Revelation is not a gigantic algebra problem. It is instead an artist's collection. For example, when confronted with the beast arising from the seas in Revelation 13, the algebraic mentality drives us to ask, who is it? Hitler? Mussolini? Kissinger? Gorbachev? This is not the way to read a picture book of art. The artist is more likely to ask, what ideas does the symbol inspire? For example, the artist might interpret the beast as demonic civil government or a combination of Hitler, Mussolini, Kissinger, and Gorbachev and the images that they inspire. The scientific mentality uses the intellect to look for one answer to the symbols; the artistic mentality uses the imagination to find a kaleidoscope of images in the symbols. Apocalyptic is much better understood by the imagination than the intellect.

Finally, assuming that we are to understand apocalyptic symbols: where do we look for the meanings of the symbols in apocalyptic literature? This question has been answered in four different ways by the various schools of interpretation. Nearly every passage in apocalyptic literature can be interpreted in at least four ways, depending on where the interpreter looks for meaning of the symbol being interpreted.

The preterist looks for the symbol in the first century, the time when the literature was written. For example, the preterist would find the meaning of the beast from the sea in Revelation 13 in the political situation of the first century Roman Empire. This beast might be Emperors Nero or Domitian. Although the meaning of the symbols is found in the first century, there is still application for us today. This is similar to the way we interpret the Pauline epistles. Although 1 Corinthians is primarily written to the issues prevalent in the church at Corinth (e.g., divisions, incest, role of

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women), it still has application to similar situations in the church today. The problem with this method is that the relationship of the material to us is only indirect.

If the preterist looks for the meaning in the first century, the historicist looks for the meaning of apocalyptic symbols in church history. The Book of Revelation is considered to be a symbolic portrayal of the history of the Christian church. Commentators with this perspective have interpreted the beast from the sea to be Mohammed, Frederick II, Luther, Napoleon, Hitler, and many others. Indeed, this is the problem with the historicist perspective. There are no principles to determine what the meaning is. It could be literally anything. Therefore, historicists are in danger whenever they become too specific about what is meant.

Perhaps the most popular method for interpreting apocalyptic in the evangelical church today is the futurist. These interpreters find the meaning of the symbols in the immediate future and see the implications to indicate that the end of the world is near. In the twentieth century, futurists have interpreted the beast from the sea to be Mussolini, Kisinger, Gorbachev, or a computer. Again, this method becomes problematic when it becomes too precise and focuses on certain specific events as indication that the end is near. After all, everyone who has made such specific predictions in the past—and there have been many—has been wrong.

The last method of interpretation looks for more general interpretations of the symbols. The idealist looks for the meaning in ideas, not people and events. The beast from the sea refers to political

systems that have become demonic because they have usurped the authority that rightfully belongs to God. Nazi Germany would be an example of this, but there are many others to be found, historically and in the present world. The problem that many evangelicals have with this position is that it does not seem to take Scripture as literally as the other positions.

Which of these principles of interpretation is correct? If we are dealing with an artistic picture book, perhaps they all are true. If we can free ourselves from the tendency to treat apocalyptic literature as we would an algebra problem, we can see them as all being true. This will free our imaginations to the panorama of truth in apocalyptic literature that is waiting to be revealed to us. ■

Phoebe's Journal

Passing on values

As we consider the new doctrinal statement at General Conference, one issue at stake is how we pass on our beliefs and values to succeeding generations of Brethren in Christ. Even though the Bible hasn't changed, the church has adapted and changed and rewritten its explanation of what we believe the Bible says several times during our history. We've done this in part because as times and culture change, our expressions of faith also need to change. Some people have likely resisted each rewriting, feeling either that what we had was serving us well or that important things were being lost or compromised. I know that's true this time.

Eventually, we will approve a new denominational statement of faith. Then, even though what we believe will be defined on paper, we will still allow for a certain amount of pluralism in belief and latitude in behavior. There will continue to be the tension between what the church officially believes or stands for and what its individual members actually believe.

How do we feel about this? How do

we feel about change in the church, especially on such fundamental matters as doctrinal beliefs? What is our attitude toward people who call themselves Brethren in Christ but who choose expressions of faith with which we disagree (and which disagree to some extent with official statements of doctrine)?

These are questions that for me have parallels—albeit imperfect ones—with parenting. While I care deeply about the church, right now my emotions are just as heavily invested in my struggles with an adolescent child who is rebelling against and testing parental values and beliefs. I'm concerned not only about how to deal with pluralism and change in the church, but also about how to deal with children who don't seem to be internalizing what I've tried to teach them, but rather seem bent on contradicting everything I say.

Other parents have emerged at the

other end of the struggle I'm in with a healthy and satisfying relationship with an adult child; they tell me that "this too will pass." Maybe so, I say, but it's not much comfort when I'm embroiled in daily battles.

While I know intellectually that this is a normal part of adolescent behavior and necessary to finding an identity apart from parents, emotionally I'm hurt that it had to happen in *my* family. I thought we had provided enough room in which to move so that rebellion was unnecessary. Naïve thinking, I now admit! I'm also hurt because the values that are important to me are seeming to be rejected. And I worry that I have contributed to the rebellion—that I have not modeled in my own life what I expect my children to emulate or that my challenges to responsibility (translation: nagging) have been completely counterproductive.

In the middle of the pain I feel, I also know that perhaps (but only perhaps!) I would not want it any other way. If I have taught my children to think for themselves and truly believe that they are free agents responsible to make their own choices, I should not be surprised when they do just that. I would not want them to be clones of their parents; they have the right to be who *they* are. That's a hard thing to say in all honesty because

Readers may correspond with both Phoebe and Onesimus by writing to them c/o the Evangelical Visitor, P.O. Box 166, Napanee, IN 46550.

parents never know what it's actually going to mean, and we want to prevent at all costs some of the extreme negative effects of our children's making their own choices (teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, AIDS, dropping out of school, drunk driving, sexual promiscuity, loss of Christian faith, and even suicide).

The discussion in the church about restating and reaffirming our faith so that we can pass it on effectively is a

helpful model for parents. In the church, as in all of life, some change is inevitable, and we can't always prevent it from happening, much as we might want to. Similarly, our children will be different from us—perhaps in ways that we question, but perhaps also in ways that improve on what we did. What is probably most important is that we clearly and repeatedly tell our children what we believe and why, and then trust that the

biblical principle will hold true: "Train up a child in the way she should go, and when she is old she will not turn from it." Easier said than done, but I'm working on it!

Phoebe

Onesimus

Dear Paul:

Did you know that some of the churches in Asia Minor are getting together soon to see whether we can come to an agreement on some basic doctrinal issues? It isn't, at the moment, so much a matter of heresy (although that danger is always with us) as that we have a truly cosmopolitan cultural mix of Greeks, Romans, and Jews. Even after we have become united in acknowledging Jesus Christ as God come in the flesh, our Savior and risen Lord, we often misunderstand each other because our mindsets are so different. The Greeks

tend to reject ideas that do not sound philosophical; the Romans aren't so concerned about how it is said as long as it works; and the Jews, of course, feel that we must recognize Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Gentiles have no body of literature for which they claim any great degree of divine revelation and inspiration, so we must help them understand that the Hebrew Scriptures are totally authoritative, not only for Jews, but for all who wish to follow Christ.

They come to us with all sorts of varying ideas about creation, the nature of the Godhead, the importance of material things, and the reality of evil. The concept of sin is much more carefully defined by the Jews than by the pagans. Lifestyles are different, yet Sunday after Sunday we gather around the Lord's Table to affirm our common faith in our risen Lord. So our conference is not so much an attempt to air our differences as to arrive at consensus. If we are indeed the body of Christ, we must present a solid front to the world on the things that really matter.

Your letter to Colosse will help us a great deal, for you affirm the goodness of creation, the fatherhood of God, and the supremacy of Christ as Creator, Savior and the conqueror of Satan, sin and death. You conclude with good practical advice on lifestyle issues that affect the quality of our Christian life. In other words, you are philosophical enough for the Greeks, scriptural enough for the Jews, and practical enough for the Romans!

Now, will you please pray for us, that we will hammer out a statement of faith that will be intelligible to everyone without being guilty of syncretism. Pray, too, that we will all be able to look

objectively at our personal viewpoints, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

I am so excited, Paul, about the way truth has come together for me since I invited Christ to live in my heart by faith. I believe that the statements that come out of this conference will have something very special to say to our confused and lost society, but we need humility and the grace to hear God's word as it comes to us through our brothers and sisters.

Please keep praying for us, and for the continuing spread of the gospel.

Onesimus

Shadow of the Cross . . .

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holding neither permanent solutions nor prospects for peace firmly in their grasp.

Of all people, we Christians should understand the supreme irony of history: Over the centuries dictators and presidents and kings have sent their subjects forth to die for them. Not one of those kings has survived. But the one King who sent not his subjects out to die for him, but instead died for them, lives today, sparking within hearts and nations the relentless quest for freedom from earthly tyrants.

Look again. Cast over the unfolding events in the East today is not the shadow of Man of the Decade Mikhail Gorbachev, nor the reflection of any single earthly leader, but the long silhouette of the cross of Christ. ■

P.S. The conference was over before I had a chance to send this letter. It was great! You will be overjoyed to know that the Holy Spirit was indeed among us to lead us into all truth. As we shared our insights, based not only on personal experience, but on the Scripture and your letters, a lot of concepts came clear. We didn't all agree about everything all the time, but for those occasions there was our beloved John, who came over from Ephesus to remind us of what was most important. "Dear friends, let us love one another," he said, "for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." He didn't mean that anything goes as long as we aren't quarrelling, but that truth can be ascertained fully only as we reach for it in an atmosphere of love and respect.

May the peace of God which we sensed at this conference be felt by you also in your prison cell in Rome.

Your faithful servant,
Onesimus

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The shadow of the Cross

by Chuck Colson

Soon after *Time* magazine crowned Mikhail Gorbachev "Man of the Decade," it seemed that the Soviet leader might instead be man of an hour soon to pass. Rumors that he was stepping down as Communist party chief swirled from Moscow to capitals around the world, creating a seismic wave: Stocks plunged on the Tokyo exchange and on Wall Street; financial analysts panicked and political commentators wrung their hands.

The assumption seems to be that the incredible changes in the East have all come because of Gorbachev—and if he were to lose his grip, all progress would cease. As one commentator put it, "He is the leader of the movement that took the whole world by surprise. Without him, there would not be the breakthrough we've seen in Europe."

The assumption is understandable: Gorbachev, after all, is a skillful politician, masterfully portraying himself as the charismatic leader benignly steering the East toward democracy and the world toward peace.

But at the risk of being labeled a heretic in the face of the West's Gorbyphoria, I question the conventional wisdom. Recent accounts from Eastern Europe suggest that its extraordinary political upheaval is less the result of *perestroika* and *glasnost* than of deep-rooted spiritual forces.

Take East Germany. Though church attendance is minimal, regular Monday evening services at Leipzig's Saint Nikolai Church—at first attended by angry and bitter would-be emigres—grew instead into prayerful gatherings of

200,000 people, a rallying point for peaceful political change. As Berlin's British commander later said, "The role of the church in providing a beacon of hope and decency and human courage has been of incalculable importance."

It is now clear that Romania's freedom movement was sparked in the town of Timisoara by a young Reformed pastor, Laszlo Tokes. When the secret police came to Tokes's church to arrest him for his criticism of Ceausescu's repressive regime, his supporters formed a human blockade around him. The congregation's protest swelled into the revolution that brought freedom to Romania, fueled by a vibrant, long-persecuted faith.

In Poland the freedom movement was born almost three decades ago when the Bishop of Krakow sought approval to build a new church. When Communist authorities denied his application, the bishop had a giant cross erected and celebrated open-air masses. The Communists tore it down. The church members replaced it—over and over until finally the Communists gave up.

That Bishop of Krakow, now Pope John Paul II, is still raising the cross today. The Solidarity movement, born in the cradle of the Polish church, became a mighty political force that the Communists could not contain, paving the way for the first democracy behind the Iron Curtain.

And in the U.S.S.R. more than 70 years of communism and official atheism have yielded a surprising result: Today, says Christian dissident Irina Ratu-

shinskaya, there are more Christian believers among her generation than Communists.

Several months ago Irina was asked during a visit to the U.S. whether Mikhail Gorbachev was creating a wave of new freedoms, or, like a man on a surfboard, merely riding huge breakers of reform that would roll with or without him. Her response was blunt: Gorbachev is responding to events. Not creating them. If Joseph Stalin were leader of the Soviet Union today, he would be acting just like Gorbachev.

Though Gorbachev has acted decisively to disarm his political opposition, he may not be able to keep the lid on republics simmering with ethnic unrest, striking miners, feuding party officials, and people exasperated with an economy gutted by the bankrupt policies of communism. Though an excellent surfer, Gorbachev may well fall.

While the prospect seems to terrify Wall Street and Western opinion makers, I doubt it would slow down for a moment a movement beyond the power of any man or government to control.

I have often warned against the dangers of the "political illusion"—the tendency to put ultimate trust and hope in political leaders and structures. We've often seen this in the U.S. Ironically, now the focus is on not our own leaders, but the head of the Soviet Union.

Make no mistake: Political structures are important. Prudent international policies are crucial. But the fact is, the princes of this world will come and go,

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Pontius' Puddle

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Bishops' Column

This present light

by John A. Byers

There seems to be no shortage of conversation about darkness (evil). For example, the popular book *This Present Darkness* vividly portrays the presence of evil in our society. The news reports make certain the worst is known.

There is darkness in our society. What else can be expected when humanity is so intent on having its own way? This darkness is intense and pervasive. It is being expressed in many ways. A radio talk show host, frustrated by what he termed "wacko" calls, said maybe there needs to be a moratorium on all this talk about the end of history.

Darkness, however, needs to be confronted. If the church is to be pro-active and effective in its war against evil, it needs a strategy to reduce evil.

Several options are possible. The one referred to above—pretending it does not exist—stimulates the growth of evil.

Charles Colson reported on a meeting in Washington D.C. where a "second option" was discussed. Evangelical leaders and political activists were discussing the opposition that Christianity is receiving. In some schools students are forbidden to wear Fellowship of Christian Athletes T-shirts, while satanic T-shirts are permitted. One person, perhaps in desperation, suggested the creation of an antidefamation league. There was strong applause. We know from history that such approaches have not removed the darkness.

A third option might be termed "try Light," the Light being the person and nature of Christ expressed by his followers in their personal/corporate resistance of evil.

This Light has greater intensity than darkness. John described it well in 1:14 (Good News for Modern Man) when he said, "Darkness has never put it out." No matter how dark the evil, it cannot extinguish the Light of the gospel. It cannot be "put out," but only "turned off" by a personal choice to follow evil rather than God. Even when the evilness of one's heart turns off the Light, it is there waiting to resume its place in one's life and/or society.

Light is the way to life, growth, and health. It lifts discouragement and motivates. Recently someone remarked about having more energy now that longer days are returning. Light lifts the spirit and energizes.

Every believer does not merely have Light, but *is* light. Paul informs us that believers are "light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). Jesus proclaimed that believers are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). We have been called out of darkness to be a light in our world. Our challenge is to live as children of light.

Despite this calling, light seems to be less popular than darkness. Conversations prevail about the sad condition of our society, rather than the message of hope and good news.

Our task is to be "a present light" and an effective antidote to this present darkness. Light has a proven record of conquering. This generation is not the first to encounter hostility towards Christianity. The early Church had its Nero who revealed the darkness of his own soul by using believers as human torches to "light up" his parties. Our Anabaptist roots have familiarized us with stories of persecution at the hands of others who also claimed light.

Contemporary news reports the survival of the Church in the East even though Christianity was unlawful and vigorously persecuted. These people chose to follow the biblical injunction of

doing good deeds and keeping their behavior above reproach while being slandered as evil doers. Light is dispelling darkness. The truth of John 1:14 is verified by history. Light prevails. In spite of the Neros, the darkness has not put out the Light.

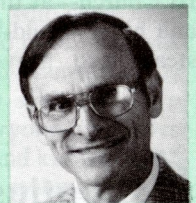
We may see days of testing and persecution. There is increasing pressure to resist Christianity. It is right that we be alert to such conditions and necessary that we respond as Light.

When testing comes it would be easy to retreat into protected settings, and decry the evil of the day. While this may save our light, it certainly will not penetrate the darkness.

Another response would be to attack the enemy with the same method he uses. Fight fire with fire. Get more laws passed to protect Christianity than there are against it. This too is only a survival tactic.

There is really only one choice, and that is to demonstrate to our world the loving warmth and compassion of Christians. There needs to be a commitment to encountering the darkness and extinguishing it. True, there is the possibility of persecution. Perhaps that is part of the problem. The church has a greater concern for its comfort than it has for "fighting darkness." The use of light demands living as a light in the midst of darkness. It's the only way. "This present Light" is greater than "this present darkness" when the church lives as a holy people, loving each other and the world around us.

John Byers is concluding his second term as bishop of the Atlantic Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.



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